

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 25, 2011

Dear Mr. President,

Last year, when you and members of your party enjoyed total control over the United States government, you failed to pass any kind of budget. It has been 756 days since the last budget was passed by the Senate under the control of Democrats. The budget process for America is clearly broken. And now the debt ceiling limit has been reached.

Recently, your Administration has been warning the public of the dangers of not raising the debt ceiling. Members of your party have been saying that failure to raise the debt ceiling would be irresponsible.

We believe it is irresponsible to spread panic instead of taking responsible action to calm the markets. We believe it is irresponsible to ignore the broken political system and the very real possibility that the debt ceiling might not be raised in time. And we believe it is irresponsible not to develop robust contingency plans now - just in case.

Your FY2012 Budget estimates the Federal Government will receive \$2.6 trillion in revenue next year. That is \$800 billion more than the Clinton Administration spent in FY2001. This \$2.6 trillion would easily cover all interest on the debt (\$256 billion), 100% of Social Security, and essential defense, security, health, and safety spending. It would not be pleasant operating under a "Debt Ceiling Budget," and no one is recommending it. But it would not be Armageddon.

We are calling on your Administration to immediately begin working with budget experts in Congress to allocate spending within a \$2.6 trillion Debt Ceiling Budget. All agency heads should then be instructed to develop plans to make sure essential services would be funded on a priority basis.

Taking responsible action now will avert a crisis in the future. Hopefully, you will take advantage of the genuine desire expressed by Republican Senators in our meeting with you on May 12<sup>th</sup> to work with you in good faith to solve our nation's fiscal problem.

Finding real solutions is the preferred course of action. All spending programs must be on the table to achieve the structural reform necessary to avert a real debt crisis. We stand ready to be your willing partners in developing those solutions.

This is no time to play politics. The American people are depending on all of us.

Sincerely,



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