

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 3, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

The Budget Control Act (S.637) signed into law on August 2, 2011, creates a new joint congressional committee entrusted with recommending and ultimately crafting legislation to reduce our deficit by at least \$1.2 trillion. We support addressing our national debt and warding off what has been called the "most predictable economic crisis" in our nation's history. However, we are united in our concern about the authority granted to this committee.

As we understand it, this Committee essentially has the ability to craft their list of recommendations without any joint committee jurisdictions and without an open committee process. Furthermore, these recommendations are not subject to debate or an amendment process afforded the majority of legislation considered in the Senate.

We remain concerned that all aspects of the federal budget, including revenue increases, could be subject to the Committee's recommendations. If our colleagues wish to raise taxes or propose spending cuts, the American people have a right to see that process unfold.

We ask you, as two of the appointers of the Committee, to ensure that all meetings and hearings are done in a transparent manner through advanced public notification, public attendance and live television broadcasts. Meetings will include any time a quorum of members are present to discuss committee related matters whether it be in person, over the phone or via teleconference.

All Americans should have the ability to see how the Committee crafts a concrete plan for our fiscal future. As original cosponsors of the Budget Control Joint Committee Transparency Act (S.1501), we stand firm in our belief that the public should understand how their tax dollars are being spent, which requires an open process rather than a series of closed-door meetings.

We recognize the very serious dangers posed by our nation's debt and share your commitment to addressing it. As you begin to craft the Committee, we ask that you allow this process to unfold before the American people through an open debate. We remain committed to this issue and hope that it will be resolved prior to consideration of S. 1501.

In order to meet our nation's financial obligations, this body must meet its obligation to the American people to do the work we were sent here to do. We look forward to your response to this request.

Sincerely,



U.S. Senator Dean Heller



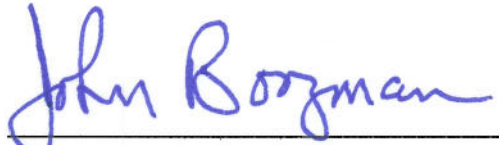
U.S. Senator David Vitter



U.S. Senator Mike Lee



U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte



U.S. Senator John Boozman



U.S. Senator Ron Johnson