

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 7, 2012

The Honorable Dave Camp
341 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

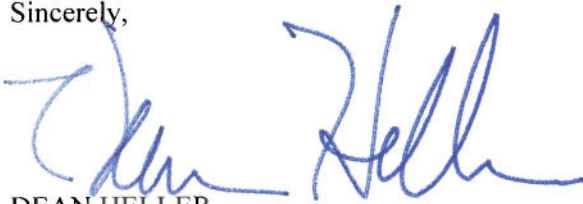
Dear Chairman Camp,

I applaud the Conference Committee's commitment to working out bipartisan solutions that will help Americans struggling in this difficult economy. The enormous difficulty of your task was highlighted by the recent release of the Congressional Budget Office's Budget and Economic Outlook, which predicted a deficit of more than \$1 trillion this fiscal year alone. Solutions are needed more than ever, and I continue to support a full extension of the payroll tax holiday, unemployment insurance, and Medicare physician reimbursement fix as outlined in my January 9 letter. However, I wanted to take this opportunity to emphasize my particular support for vital public safety nets in this time of continued economic difficulty.

My home state of Nevada has led the nation in unemployment for more than two years. While our current unemployment rate of 12.6 percent is lower than its peak of 14.9 percent, it is nowhere near where we need to be. To me, this figure isn't simply a number – it represents thousands of Nevadans and their families who are struggling to get by, in addition to thousands more who have given up looking for work altogether. As the Conference Committee sets priorities, I urge you to preserve unemployment benefits at their current levels in states like Nevada that continue experiencing high unemployment. As a fiscal conservative, I understand the budgetary constraints that you are working within as well as the desire to reduce benefits in states that have demonstrated economic improvement. That said, I do not believe the citizens of states like Nevada should bear the full weight of the failed economic policies that have come out of Washington in recent years. There are solutions that provide the unemployed and the middle class with much needed assistance in a fiscally responsible manner.

Again, thank you for your service. Like the rest of our colleagues, I look forward to reviewing a product from the Conference Committee that addresses the payroll tax holiday, unemployment insurance, and the Medicare physician reimbursement policies for the remainder of 2012. I stand ready to assist the Conference Committee in developing solutions that will protect states as well as the long-term fiscal future of our nation.

Sincerely,



DEAN HELLER
U.S. Senator