



December 12, 2013

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

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

Re: The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013

Dear Majority and Minority Leaders,

I am writing on behalf of the Military Spouse JD Network (MSJDN), a bar association for attorney spouses and partners of members of the United States Uniformed Services, to state MSJDN's grave concerns regarding certain provisions of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013.

MSJDN appreciates the efforts of our leaders to work toward a legislative means of easing the burden of sequestration on the defense budget. However, we strongly object to doing so by breaking faith with men and women that have served this country for decades, and breaking this country's promises concerning how they will be cared for once their service is completed. Easing the burden of sequestration is an important goal; but the Bipartisan Budget Act does so by taxing those who have served this country the longest, and merely reallocates the sequestration burden in an even more egregious way.

Although the one percent annual reduction in Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is being discussed as a small change, it is by no means small to the many men and women affected, or their families. According to the Military Officers Association of America, soldiers who retire after twenty years of service stand to lose nearly 20% of their retired pay between the time they retire and the time they turn 62 years of age. For enlisted families, this translates in a loss of approximately \$83,000 in retirement income. For officers, that number is even higher.

We recognize that it is within the legislature's discretion to adjust military benefits; however the importance of doing so judiciously is paramount. That is one reason Congress mandated the

Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission in the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, and why such decisions may not be considered in fast-track fashion. Moreover, the MCRMC recommendations grandfather existing forces when changes are made, keeping commitments to current soldiers while the new policies are applied to new ones. In this way, faith is kept, promises are kept, and new policies are fully disclosed to new people considering military service.

Those serving in all branches of the military make up less than 1% of the population in the United States—1% fighting for everyone's freedoms, serving voluntarily. The men and women who reach retirement in the United States Uniformed Services have sacrificed tremendously for all of our freedoms, many of them through over a decade of war. And their families have also sacrificed, serving this country in good faith, and believing that at the end of their service a grateful nation would treat them in good faith in return. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 does not keep faith with these brave men and women, instead asking them to sacrifice more still as a quick fix to a budget crisis they did not cause.

MSJDN strongly urges our legislators to oppose the Bipartisan Budget Act provisions that would shift such a heavy burden onto those who have already sacrificed more than their fair share, and deserve better from a grateful nation.

Best Regards,



Mary Reding  
President  
Military Spouse J.D. Network

Cc: President Obama  
Secretary Hagel  
Members of the Senate  
Members of the House of Representatives