



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Robert F. McDonnell
Governor

October 9, 2012

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

I write today to respectfully request that you take direct, immediate steps to help our nation avoid the impact that devastating defense and military sequestration cuts will have on national security, as well as on the lives of a great number of the citizens of Virginia and America. In Virginia alone, 125,000 men and women in uniform, as well as 830,000 veterans who have served our nation, rely on you as Commander-in-Chief to avert sequestration. Your most recent introduced budget reduced defense spending by \$487 billion this year. The Budget Control Act of 2011, which created sequestration, adds another \$500 billion in defense cuts over the next 9 years, coupled with the defense cuts you requested. Cutting defense by over \$1 trillion during a time of war with uncertainty in the Middle East is the wrong course of action. While I fully support actions to reduce the \$16 trillion national debt and the budget cuts and reforms that are needed, we cannot place half the burden of such cuts on the men and women in uniform.

You have stated that as Commander-in-Chief you have no greater responsibility than protecting the national security of this nation. I agree. I am asking you to exert the leadership required to prevent this random and destructive approach to defense spending reductions from being implemented.

Your Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, has said that the magnitude of the defense cuts mandated by sequestration would “have a devastating effect on not only national defense, but I think on the rest of the country. It’s totally unacceptable ...” These defense cuts now will hollow out our Armed Forces and threaten the programs most crucial to national security. While the Secretary has firmly condemned these massive defense cuts, we have not seen action yet from you to introduce a plan to reduce these cuts and support the Defense Department.

Here in Virginia, we are acutely aware of the stakes. A study performed by Dr. Stephen S. Fuller, a respected economist at George Mason University, predicts that Virginia would lose 136,191 Department of Defense and 71,380 non Department of Defense jobs as a result of

The Honorable Barack H. Obama

October 9, 2012

Page 2

sequestration. A total of \$20.876 billion would be lost in gross state product in the Commonwealth, and \$10.627 billion would be lost from labor income. Virginia is one of the top ten states of aerospace and defense industries employees with roughly 36,941 direct employees working in that sector, all of whom would be negatively affected by sequestration. The Commonwealth has the greatest number of jobs related to shipbuilding and shipyard operations in the nation – and sequestration would negatively impact this important industry as well. Uncertainty is pervasive in the defense industry and at the direction of your administration, WARN Act notices have not gone out to advise Virginians of impending massive layoffs. The promise to pay legal fees of defense contractors who are sued is of questionable authority, and congressional leaders have said they will not approve such actions.

Thankfully, some action has been taken to help prevent sequestration from occurring. The Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act of 2012, an effort by the House of Representatives to avoid huge defense cuts, was introduced in the House on May 9, 2012, quickly passed and sent immediately to the United States Senate. Unfortunately, that was where the action ended. This important piece of legislation has been on the Senate Calendar since May 15, 2012, and yet, nothing has been done to advance it for consideration by the Senate. I implore you exert the leadership now required of your office to get the Senate Majority Leader to bring this important legislation to the Senate floor for action.

I join my fellow governors in red and blue states in urging you to bring the congressional leadership together to enact necessary legislation to avoid the disastrous effects of this policy. On behalf of all Virginians, I ask you to help prevent the potential degradation of our defense, and the negative impact on our economy that will surely result if sequestration is allowed to take effect this January.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert F. McDonnell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert F. McDonnell

cc: Virginia Congressional Delegation
Virginia Legislature
The Honorable Martin L. Kent
The Honorable Terrie L. Suit