Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 21, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Jeb Hensarling

Co-Chairs
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
The Honorable James E. Clyburn
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
The Honorable Dave Camp
The Honorable Fred Upton

The Honorable Max Baucus
The Honorable John Kerry
The Honorable Jon Kyl
The Honorable Rob Portman
The Honorable Pat Toomey

Members
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction

Dear Co-Chairs and Members,

Congress and the American people have entrusted you with a great responsibility – ensuring the economic well-being of our nation and the creation of jobs. This is no simple task and will require both bold decisions and fair compromises.

We understand that you will consider many options when it comes to reaching the benchmarks set by Congress. But too often, when it has come time to reduce spending, the most vulnerable - the working poor and the middle class - have been asked to bear most of the sacrifice. Fortunately, there are other alternatives.

To generate much-needed savings, we strongly urge you to examine the costs of the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. To date, the wars have cost our taxpayers at least $2.3 trillion, with an additional $884 billion in future costs for veterans and their families. This adds up to a total of at least $3.2 trillion. By ending the wars and paying for a safe, orderly, and responsible redeployment of troops from both Afghanistan and Iraq, we can go a long way toward meeting our fiscal challenges. We propose:

- Ending the overseas contingency operations emergency supplementals and on-budget appropriations starting in Fiscal Year 2013, providing $170 billion in Fiscal Year 2012 to fund redeployment, while ***saving more than $1.8 trillion from current law spending levels over ten years***

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These reductions are substantial and robust. They will put us on the road to a more prosperous and secure future while advancing our national security interests.

Exorbitant spending on failed wars that have killed thousands of Americans must not be exempt from budgetary scrutiny. Before we ask American families to pitch in more, let's bring our troops home – and, in the process, our tax dollars home.

Sincerely,

Lynn Woolsey

Walter B. Jones

Robert A. Brady

John J. Duncan, Jr.

David N. Cicilline

Ron Paul

Jackie Speier

Timothy V. Johnson

Doris O. Matsui

John Garamendi

Mike Thompson

Fortney Pete Stark

Kurt Schrader

Donna F. Edwards

John Lewis

Karen Bass

Paul Tonko

James P. McGovern

Jared Polis

Steve Cohen

Marcia L. Fudge

Keith Ellison

Yvette D. Clarke

Jim McDermott

John W. Olver

Loretta Sanchez

Sam Farr

Rush D. Holt

Chellie Pingree

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Peter A. DeFazio

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Marcy Kaptur

George Miller

José E. Serrano

Elijah E. Cummings

Edolphus Towns

Gwen Moore

Barney Frank

Luis V. Gutierrez

Barbara Lee

Bobby L. Rush

Donald M. Payne

Carolyn B. Maloney

Jerrold Nadler

Charles B. Rangel

Joe Baca

Janice D. Schakowsky

Janice Hahn

Wm. Lacy Clay

Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.

Linda Sanchez

John Conyers, Jr.

Bob Filner

Maurice D. Hinchey

Dennis J. Kucinich

Tammy Baldwin

Louise McIntosh Slaughter

Mike Quigley