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October 16, 2013

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I urge you to support the bipartisan agreement reached in the U.S. Senate to re-open the federal government and to ensure that our nation can pay its bills on time. Importantly, the final agreement leaves the Affordable Care Act intact and includes back pay for furloughed workers.

This package is by no means perfect, most notably, because it leaves in place the federal spending cuts imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011 until January 15. These severely low funding levels are clearly hurting the economy. Unemployment remain dangerously high, and extending the sequester another year could result in the loss of nearly 1 million more jobs, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). It is long past time for Congress to shift its focus to policies that promote responsible economic growth, create good jobs, and restore tax fairness, not on prolonging the failed policies of fiscal austerity.

As we move forward from this budget debacle, it is essential that Congress takes responsible steps to avoid additional unnecessary and manufactured crises surrounding the next set of budget deadlines and beyond. The country simply cannot afford another round of disruptions in public services, loss of pay and layoffs for workers, and additional injury to our economy.

AFSCME urges you to support the bipartisan budget package and work toward creating a sustainable, reasonable plan to eliminate the sequester, raise revenues and keep the government and public services operating seamlessly.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Loveless
Director of Federal Government Affairs

CML:bl:md