

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

ENERGY AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

November 21, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama, Majority Leader Reid, Speaker Boehner, Minority Leader Pelosi and  
Minority Leader McConnell,

We can all agree that this is a critical moment in our nation's history. I don't believe that any one of us – or any Member of Congress – wants to be part of the first generation that hands off this great country to the next generation in worse shape than we inherited it. But America is facing a bleak fiscal picture, with our national debt exceeding \$15 trillion for the first time in history and projected to hit \$21 trillion in 2021, and the prospect of interest on our debt reaching the level of our current defense spending in as soon as a decade.

For the sake of our nation and our children, I urge you, as President and the leaders of each chamber of Congress, to offer any and all support so that the super committee – the select group of 12 who volunteered to tackle our deficits – can work through any impasse in these final hours and come to an agreement that is the best interests of our future. Simply put, the super committee cannot fail.

If the super committee fails – and I believe it must not – other action must be taken. We face the potential for future credit rating downgrades, increased market uncertainty, an unacceptably high unemployment rate, and, more importantly, the loss of even more confidence by the American people that their elected representatives can work together for the good of this great nation. We can and must do better than that.

I am one of the more than 140 Members of Congress, split almost evenly between Democrats and Republicans, who have stood tall to say we must “Go Big” and find \$4 trillion in reductions. Respectfully, if the super committee fails to meet its mandate, I urge all of you to back a deficit reduction plan that would meet the \$4 trillion goal, stabilize our national debt and provide much-needed reforms to our tax system.

In the year that I have been in Washington, only the Bowles-Simpson proposal has generated bipartisan support in both houses of Congress. While the Bowles-Simpson framework may not be perfect, it is the only proposal I have seen that provides pro-growth tax reform and long-term entitlement reform, while cutting our national debt.

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In this spirit, if the super committee fails, I respectfully ask that you help us prove to the American people that we can still do our job at this critical juncture. I urge you to give the entire Congress a vote on the recommendations of the Bowles-Simpson Fiscal Commission.

Sincerely,



Senator Joe Manchin III

- cc: Senator Harry Reid  
U.S. Senate Majority Leader  
U.S. Capitol S-221
- cc: Congressman John Boehner  
Office of the Speaker  
U.S. Capitol H-232
- cc: Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi  
Office of the Democratic Leader  
U.S. Capitol H-204
- cc: Senator Mitch McConnell  
Office of the Minority Leader  
U.S. Capitol S-230