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Dear Friend:

Here we are on March 1, 2013. The first day of the "Sequester"— a law passed 18 months ago to achieve a 2.4 percent reduction in federal spending by imposing an "across the board" reduction in all federal discretionary accounts. But what does it mean to you and your family? And what does it mean for the future of our country?

As you know, our federal budget is in bad shape. America spends \$3.5 trillion each year. America is collecting more tax revenue than ever before in our nation's history, and yet America is spending so much more than we are taking in that we're borrowing about 30 cents of every dollar that we spend. So far, [we've borrowed \\$16.6 trillion](#) from the Chinese, Germans, our own citizens and more—a debt that our children and grandchildren must repay.

Those are big numbers, so let's put it in the context of an average American family. David Walker, the former U.S. Comptroller General, calculated these numbers at the end of 2012. The median annual income for an American family is \$50,502. If that family spent \$73,417 last year and had an accumulated credit card balance of \$322,205, that family would look like America. Clearly, that family is headed toward disaster financially, and so too is America. Sequester isn't so bold that it would ask this family to live within its \$50,502 means; sequester asks only that the family reduce its spending from \$73,417 last year to \$71,655 this year.

I know what many of you are thinking: "Rob, reductions in spending are never easy, but that is just a drop in the bucket! This family must make much bigger reductions in spending if it is to survive." You're absolutely right, but look at the hype already surrounding this first step. For example, the U.S. Education Secretary claims that the sequester is already causing American teachers to get pink slips. Even the Washington Post is giving this outrageous statement "[four Pinocchios](#)," but this gives you some idea of the aggressive campaign to ensure that we continue to borrow and spend more and more.

I won't defend the Sequester as the smartest way to reduce spending. It isn't, and that is why I supported a replacement for the sequester last year that would have kept intact important funding for our national priorities and simultaneously made a variety of targeted and long overdue reductions to failing, ineffective, and duplicative federal programs. Twice in the House we passed these alternative reductions, but the Senate didn't take our bills up and hasn't passed any replacement bills of its own. While the President is talking a lot about the sequester, [he is doing very little](#) to press the Senate to pass anything.

When any family is borrowing 30 cents of every dollar it spends, getting that family back to sound fiscal ground is hard. So too is getting America back to sound fiscal ground. I will work with anyone—Republican or Democrat, House or Senate—to ensure that freedom and opportunity thrive in America for generations to come. But working together means being honest with each other about the size of our problem and the options for a solution. [Those who cry "Wolf!"](#) each time a reduction that the President, the House, and Senate have all agreed to is about to go into effect, undermine America's trust in the elected government in Washington.

The long term answer to America's fiscal woes is renegotiating the benefits that my generation (born in 1970) and those younger have been promised over the next 75 years. The medium term answer is to move back toward solving local problems with local solutions and getting the federal government out of those roles that local government or the private sector should be doing. The short term answer--unless the Senate is able to pass an alternative like the House has (the Senate failed twice again yesterday)--is to follow through on this 2.4% across-the-board reduction.

No, it isn't enough. Yes, in some cases it will be hard. No, we still can't look our children and grandchildren in the eye and tell them that we have done all that we could to preserve America's freedom and opportunity for them. Yes, I will continue to work at it—achieving as much each and every day as we can—until we can look those children in the eye and tell them with confidence that we are passing America along to them even stronger than we received it.

Together, we will succeed.

As always, if your family is facing any particular challenges with or questions about the sequester, please contact me. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you.

Sincerely,



Rob Woodall
Member of Congress

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