

October 18, 2011

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling  
129 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20036

The Honorable Patty Murray  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hensarling and Chairwoman Murray:

On behalf of the 85,000 registered nurses of the Nurse Alliance of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) we are writing to share our grave concerns that additional cuts to our nation's healthcare system, in addition to those already enacted in the Budget Control Act of 2011, would be devastating to our patients and to America's economic recovery.

We appreciate the significance of your roles as Co-Chairs of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction and want to convey that our greatest priority is to see our country and our patients recover from this Great Recession. Our emergency rooms are overflowing, the number of citizens in our states who rely on Medicaid is increasing, we are treating more children who are undernourished and "failing to thrive" and more parents are skipping lifesaving medications. These are all symptoms stemming from the fact that 14 million Americans cannot find a good job to support their families and millions more are underemployed. This is a terrible cost we are paying as a country that cannot be measured by the Congressional Budget Office. America cannot save money by cutting healthcare services to seniors and people with disabilities and children or shifting more costs to state budgets. We will all pay more in the end and some Americans will pay with their lives. The attached letters from nurses around the country vividly illustrate these costs.

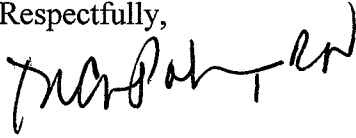
At a time when Americans are evaluating every congressional action with job creation foremost in mind, cuts to Medicare and Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act would endanger jobs within the healthcare sector and beyond. According to Families USA, every \$1 million in Medicaid reductions would result in the loss of 17.1 jobs across the board. That means lost livelihoods for individuals, lost demand for businesses and lost tax revenue for state and local governments. There is a better way to drive economic recovery: maintain our investments in our healthcare system and in the health of Americans.

With jobs that cannot be shipped overseas and ideas that can open the door to greater innovation, the healthcare sector is America's greatest jobs engine. Healthcare is on track to generate 3.2 million new jobs by 2018 due to the demands of a rapidly aging and longer living America. Nurse shortages are already severe in both rural and urban areas and more healthcare jobs could offer current workers a way to advance their careers. Cutting Medicaid, Medicare and Affordable Care Act would endanger patients and result in fewer nurses, doctors and healthcare workers at the exact moment America needs to create more than 400,000 jobs each month for the next three years to leave this recession behind.

For all of these reasons, we respectfully request that the Joint Select Committee remove Medicaid, Medicare and the Affordable Care Act from consideration for cuts in its deliberations. In addition, we ask that the committee strive to reach a fair and balanced

approach to generate the revenue necessary to honor our commitments to provide quality, affordable healthcare to the vast majority of Americans, and especially our seniors.

Respectfully,



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SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin  
Madison, WI



Betsy Marville, RN  
1199SEIU UHE  
Miami, FL



Kathy Hughes, RN  
SEIU Local 121RN  
Los Angeles, CA



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Columbus, OH



Martha Baker, RN  
SEIU Local 1991  
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Nurse Alliance of CA  
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Carmen Morales Board, RN  
SEIU Local 521  
San Jose, CA



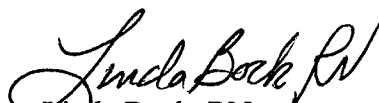
Sue Weinstein, RN  
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*Deborah Bonn RN, BSN*

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*Cathy Stoddart RNBSN*

Cathy Stoddart, RN  
SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania  
Pittsburgh, PA

cc. Members of the Committee on Deficit Reduction  
Majority Leader Harry Reid  
Minority Leader Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader John Boehner  
Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

Attachment