



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

August 2, 2012

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader Reid:

I am pleased to report that Florida's unemployment rate has dropped 2.5 percentage points to 8.6 percent since December 2010. My colleagues in the Legislature and I worked hard to address difficult decisions to get Florida headed in the right direction. We lowered taxes, limited spending through a balanced budget despite record shortfalls, paid down state debt, and reduced government bureaucracy to create an environment for all taxpayers and job creators to succeed. This formula has created jobs for Floridians, and our state's unemployment rate is dropping at a faster pace than the unemployment rate of the nation and of every other state but one.

This fall, the United States Congress will be faced with many major fiscal decisions, including consideration of a fiscal year budget, potential tax increases on millions of Americans, and budgetary sequestration that is designed to reduce discretionary spending by \$1.2 trillion over ten years. I appreciate the difficulty of these decisions. I respectfully request your careful consideration of the impacts of the estimated \$500 billion in anticipated defense cuts.

Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader Reid
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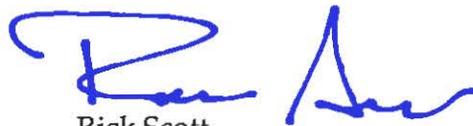
Florida plays an important role in our nation's defense because of its diverse economy, strategic location, and exceptional military and support personnel. Our state is home to 20 major military installations and three unified commands. For fiscal year 2008, defense-related spending accounted for 681,181 direct and indirect Florida jobs, according to the Florida Defense Alliance. Clearly, the defense presence in Florida plays a critical role in protecting our nation and in supporting our economy.

In examining the potential consequences of sequestration, it is devastating to see the impact that such dramatic defense cuts will have on Florida's growing economy. In the first year alone, more than 39,000 Floridians could lose their jobs because of the automatic cuts under sequestration according to a Center for Regional Analysis study. United States Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has called the upcoming defense cuts "unworkable" and "a disaster" and insisted that they will "inflict severe damage to our national defense." This kind of threat to our defense capabilities and economy must be taken seriously.

As Governor of Florida, my job is to create a safe environment for Floridians to thrive personally and professionally. In addition to the anticipated job loss, the level of cuts to the nation's defense capabilities required under sequestration may jeopardize the safety of Floridians. Additionally, Florida was ranked fourth among the nation's top exporting states in 2011, and Florida's ports provide an entry and exit point for United States businesses and their trading partners around the world. For this reason, it is vital to our state's economy, as well as the nation's, to keep these commerce centers secure.

While I agree with many Americans that the federal government must reduce spending, reduce taxes and create an environment conducive to private sector job growth, I urge you to prioritize the safety and security of our nation and the strength of our economy as you focus on resolving the issues related to the budget and sequestration. I encourage you to replace the impending and disastrous defense cuts with reductions in other non-essential government programs. For example, repealing the job-killing ObamaCare legislation will save close to \$1 trillion by itself. This action would be a far more responsible and sensible step toward balancing the federal budget.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
Governor

cc: Florida Congressional Delegation
The Adjutant General Major General Emmett R. Titshaw, Jr.