

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 16, 2011

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

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling  
U.S. House of Representatives  
129 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Sen. Murray and Rep. Hensarling:

In accordance with the Budget Control Act of 2011, which became law on August 2, 2011, you, as the co-chairs of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction (the "Committee"), must present to the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate legislation to reduce our nation's debt and to curb our nation's profligate spending. Developing this legislation will demand our best thinking, principles, and courage, and I write to you today to urge you to implement the recommendations from the March 2011 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled "Opportunities to Reduce Potential Duplication in Government Programs, Save Tax Dollars, and Enhance Revenue" (GAO-11-318S).

Government spending at federal departments and agencies comprises 40 percent of our budget and has contributed significantly to our current debt. Reduction or elimination of duplicative programs should be a significant part of any legislation developed by your Committee. I believe that by focusing on duplicative programs, the Committee can find areas for significant savings and better stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Among other programs, the GAO report cites 18 separate domestic food assistance programs, 20 programs to assist the homeless, 44 employment and training programs, 82 teacher quality improvement programs, 56 programs to bolster financial literacy in 20 different agencies, and more than two dozen presidential appointees across multiple agencies responsible for bio-defense initiatives. The report indicates that reducing or eliminating duplication, overlap, and fragmentation in federal programs could result in billions of dollars of savings annually, bringing as much as \$100 billion in savings in the long-run.

While eliminating these programs certainly doesn't "solve" our nation's debt crisis or end our spending addiction, it is a necessary part of much-needed reforms. We can't address our debt unless we deal with "autopilot" spending--over 60 percent of the budget and growing--primarily composed of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. However, it is critical that we consolidate programs and eliminate unnecessary overlapping of federal programs. I trust the Committee will consider this GAO report when implementing the spending cuts needed to reduce our debt.

Sincerely,



Tim Griffin  
Member of Congress