

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

FREEZE DEFENSE SPENDING AT FY12 LEVEL

July 13, 2012

“Every aspect of the discretionary budget must be scrutinized. No agency can be off limits, and no program that spends too much or achieves too little can be spared.”

-The Moment of Truth: Simpson-Bowles Commission-

Dear Colleague:

You may want to keep this letter. The chances of receiving one from a more unlikely pair of your colleagues in your time in Congress are probably pretty low.

That being said, there is one thing that even the most liberal and most conservative members of Congress might be able to agree on: talk is cheap. But we are offering an amendment that will give all of our colleagues -- our friends on the Left who say we need a balanced approach, and our friends on the Right who insist that everything is on the table -- the chance to prove that our words are not always hollow rhetoric.

The FY2013 Defense Appropriations bill spends \$3 billion above the funding request our commanding officers made. It's \$1.1 billion more than what Congress spent in this year's "megabus" spending bill. In this time of austerity, when we are discussing cutting even the most basic social safety net programs, we think increasing the defense base budget makes all our exhortations about the deficit ring hollow.

We are offering a compromise that spends more than the generals' request, but less than what is currently in the bill. **Our amendment keeps base defense spending at the level it is today - \$518 billion.** It's a 0.17% cut from the House bill. This is exactly the same level that almost 300 members supported just a few months ago in the "megabus." The amendment gives the commanding officers authority to make the \$1.1 billion reduction, but the House bill's spending levels for Military Personnel, the Defense Health Program, and the Global War on Terror are protected from any reductions.

We all recognize our duty to provide for the needs of this nation. And this amendment still allows us to do that: we fully fund our troops. But we also all recognize, as the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs correctly noted, that the debt is as much a risk to our national security as is any external threat.

The Mulvaney-Frank Amendment is consistent with last year's "megabus." It is consistent with Domenici/Rivlin. It is consistent with Simpson/Bowles. Indeed, it is consistent with matching words to actions. We hope you will join us in supporting it.

Sincerely,


Mick Mulvaney (R-SC)
Member of Congress


Barney Frank (D-MA)
Member of Congress