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*President*

September 29, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray  
United States Senate  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-4704

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling  
United States House of Representatives  
129 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4305

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Murray, Representative Hensarling and Members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction,

As the Committee pursues its task of preparing a plan to reduce the federal deficit by at least \$1.2 trillion dollars over the next decade, I write to urge investments in U.S. graduate education as a strategic national asset. Federal support for graduate education is essential to producing the highly skilled workforce necessary to enhance U.S. competitiveness in the global economy and to the creation of new knowledge, industries and associated jobs.

The highly-skilled talent that is developed in U.S. graduate schools is increasingly necessary to enhance our economic, social and creative capacity. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that from 2008-2018 about 2.5 million new jobs will require an advanced degree; those requiring a master's degree are predicted to increase by 18% during this time and those requiring a doctoral degree by about 17%.

Federal support for graduate education and research has yielded important benefits for our country – particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Graduate education in the U.S. has also served as a critical component for fostering international understanding. From the Fulbright program alone, 20 graduate scholars have gone on to become heads of state in their native countries.

The Debt Control Act of 2011 included the elimination of the in-school interest subsidy on federal Stafford loans for graduate and professional students. Thus, graduate education has already been impacted by deficit reduction measures at the very time that we need more students to pursue graduate degrees to ensure we have the talent needed to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

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#### AFFILIATES

Conference  
of Southern  
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As your committee pursues its work, the Council of Graduate Schools urges you to maintain and enhance support for graduate education programs at the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Energy, Office of Science and other agencies. We also would ask you to support graduate education programs in the humanities and social sciences that produce experts in fields such as history, area studies and foreign languages to enhance our understanding of other cultures and regions of the world.

Such investments are necessary to develop a cadre of talent across critical fields and disciplines to fuel our economy into the future. Our people are one of our most valuable resources and encouraging and enabling more people across all groups to pursue and obtain graduate degrees will position the U.S. for success in the years ahead.

Thank you for your leadership and for the important work that the Committee has undertaken to address our nation's long-term fiscal stability. We very much appreciate your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



Debra W. Stewart

cc: Senator Max Baucus (D-MT)  
Senator John Kerry (D-MA)  
Senator John Kyl (R-AZ)  
Senator Rob Portman (R-OH)  
Senator Patrick Toomey (R-PA)  
Representative Xavier Becerra (D-CA)  
Representative Dave Camp (R-MI)  
Representative James Clyburn (D-SC)  
Representative Fred Upton (R-MI)  
Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)