

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DHPE JOINED DIVERSE GROUPS TO ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF
AVERTING SEQUESTRATION**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, DHPE joined more than 3500 organizations from all sectors of the economy and society to urge Congress and President Obama to put an immediate end to sequestration budget cuts that threaten to send the economy reeling back into recession and destroy more than two million American jobs. The **Nondetense Discretionary (NDD) United** community, of which DHPE is a part delivered a letter to Congress, urging leaders to avert sequestration by adopting a “balanced approach to deficit reduction that does not include further cuts to NDD programs.” Joining together in this effort are national, state, and local organizations from all fifty states representing the health, education, law enforcement, science, housing, workforce, transportation, and faith communities, among others. Despite their diverse priorities, these organizations share a common purpose of protecting the core government functions that make up NDD spending.

Over the past two years, discretionary programs have already contributed substantially to deficit reduction through some \$1.5 trillion in spending. During that time, NDD programs were cut by 9 percent on average, with many programs cut by as much as 50 percent. Continued cuts will have consequences for every American, threatening the health, safety, and competitiveness of the United States. In 2011, NDD spending represented less than one-fifth of the federal budget and 4.3 percent of our country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Under strict discretionary caps in the bipartisan Budget Control Act (BCA), by 2021 NDD spending will decline to just 2.8 percent of GDP, the lowest level in at least 50 years. If sequestration is allowed to take effect, cuts to NDD programs will be even deeper.

The [letter](#) (72 pages long: 1 page of text plus sign-ons) explains some of what Americans will lose if Congress and President Obama don’t avert sequestration through a balanced approach to deficit reduction: Indiscriminate cuts threaten the entire range of bipartisan national priorities. Further cuts could mean Americans waiting longer for help after natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy and being more susceptible to deadly infectious diseases, like the West Nile virus, hantavirus, and meningitis. With fewer air traffic controllers, flights might be curtailed. Classroom size might increase as teachers are laid off. National parks will have fewer visitor hours. Roads and bridges will continue to crumble. Gang violence and other illicit activity might increase with fewer FBI agents and police on the streets.