

Sequestration Talking Points

Background:

In 2011, the 112th Congress passed the Budget Control Act (BCA), legislation designed to reduce the federal deficit by \$1.2 trillion over a ten year period. While the BCA employs several different mechanisms to cut federal spending, the bottom line is that the law caps Defense and non-Defense (NDD) spending at austerity levels that stifle investment in strategic priorities like faster medical progress and public health readiness. Subsequent Congresses have twice acted on a bipartisan basis to raise the caps, enabling Congress to spend more on Defense and NDD agencies and programs. The second agreement expires at the end of FY17. Unless Congress strikes another deal to raise the caps, our nation will again be forced into counter-strategic underinvestment across federal agencies and programs crucial to the health, security and well-being of our nation and populations across the globe.

Basic Talking Points:

- You and other federal leaders shouldn't have to write the nation's budget based on outdated budget laws. Those laws should be updated to reflect the challenges, opportunities and priorities that are meaningful now.
- Our nation learns from our successes and our mistakes. You and other members of Congress should have the flexibility to make different spending decisions than previous Congresses.
- Investing in research returns broad economic benefits. In the case of medical research, not only do federal grants directly support researchers in every state across our nation, but the discoveries that arise from their research have tremendous economic impact, supporting over 9 million jobs and adding billions each year to our GDP. To build a stronger economy, it is critical that we raise the progress-killing budget caps.
- Since 2011, when the Budget Control Act was signed into law, more than 11 million Americans have been diagnosed with cancer and more than 4 million have died. Diseases like cancer devastate too many families – the budget caps keep the lid shut on novel treatments and undermine life-saving progress.
- We should not permit an outdated budget law to stymie American compassion, American innovation, and American achievement. We should leverage our strengths in research and public health practice, and set our sights on saving lives.
- Global health is U.S. health. Global health threats like Ebola and drug-resistant TB do not respect national borders. Our nation needs to invest in global health research and

preparedness, and we can't do that when the sequestration budget caps are stifling strategic investment.

Other examples of Talking Points:

1. **The sequestration budget caps today mean that we can't address tomorrow's health threats.** Malaria, Zika and Ebola outbreaks illustrate the global reach of diseases; diseases know no borders. Building research capacity now is critical to ensuring that we are adequately prepared for emerging health threats.
2. **The sequestration budget caps hamstring efforts to address antibiotic resistance, placing Americans at risk.** Antibiotic resistance is an intensifying threat to the nation and is expected to kill more people than cancer by 2020. The stifling sequestration caps choke off the funding NIH, USAID and CDC in particular need to address the spread of multi-drug resistant and even totally-drug resistant forms of TB and other infectious killers.
3. **The sequestration budget caps cost American jobs.** About 64 cents of every dollar the U.S. government spends on global health R&D goes to supporting jobs for U.S.-based researchers and product developers as well as building and improving U.S. research and technological capacity.
4. **If the sequestration budget caps stay in place, we will save fewer lives tomorrow.** Research and development slows the spread of diseases that threaten lives in the US and globally. For example, The Program for Appropriate Technology in Health, commonly called PATH, is a public-private partnership that led to the development of vaccine vial monitors, which has ensured the safe delivery of vaccines to remote areas — saving an estimated 140,000 lives worldwide. Slowing down infectious diseases that know no borders like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria keeps our nation safe.
5. **The sequestration budget caps threaten our nation's standing as the world leader in medical innovation and increase our dependency on other nations.** While the U.S. is still considered the world leader in R&D, other nations are becoming more competitive. In fact, the Chinese government has invested heavily in its vaccine industry, which is one of the fastest growing in the world and which, in 2009, was able to produce the first effective vaccine for H1N1 or "swine flu" in only 87 days, beating competitors from the U.S. and Europe. China is expected to surpass the U.S. in R&D spending by 2023.
6. **The sequestration budget caps mean we are less equipped to protect our citizens and soldiers abroad.** Without a strong U.S. investment in R&D, the safety of Americans who are serving, working or traveling abroad is put in jeopardy. As the eighth largest funder of global health R&D in the world, the Department of Defense has been instrumental in protecting Americans by developing a variety of medical interventions. These include

developing the first vaccine for Japanese encephalitis, conducting the first HIV/AIDS vaccine trial and demonstrating the efficacy of various malaria treatment and prevention strategies.

7. **The sequestration budget caps hurt cutting edge medical discoveries.** The Human Genome Project (HGP) has been critical in furthering research into rare diseases. The HGP has resulted in the identification of genetic mutations that cause thousands of diseases such as cystic fibrosis, Huntington's disease, muscular dystrophy and even many forms of cancer. Through government investment in the HGP, the U.S. has been able to maintain a cadre of the world's most talented genomics researchers and scientists and remain one of the global leaders in this emerging scientific field.