

THOMAS R. CARPER, DELAWARE, CHAIRMAN

CARL LEVIN, MICHIGAN
MARK L. PRYOR, ARKANSAS
MARY L. LANDRIEU, LOUISIANA
CLAIRE McCASKILL, MISSOURI
JON TESTER, MONTANA
MARK BEGICH, ALASKA
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
HEIDI HEITKAMP, NORTH DAKOTA

TOM COBURN, OKLAHOMA
JOHN McCAIN, ARIZONA
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
ROB PORTMAN, OHIO
RAND PAUL, KENTUCKY
MICHAEL B. ENZI, WYOMING
KELLY AYOTTE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

GABRIELLE A. BATKIN, STAFF DIRECTOR
KEITH B. ASHDOWN, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

May 7, 2014

Sylvia Burwell
Director
White House Office of Management and Budget
727 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Burwell,

I appreciate your leadership as the director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Your office has an important role in protecting and stewarding taxpayers' resources. Over the last three years, one of OMB's most important responsibilities has been the implementation of sequestration, as mandated by the Budget Control Act of 2011. Not only did OMB issue guidance on how departments should plan for the budgetary reductions, OMB also had some discretion in identifying which programs were subject to sequestration reductions.

The Budget Control Act is the law of the land until FY 2021, so it is essential to have a complete understanding of how agencies manage their workforces and operations in this constrained fiscal environment.

Under OMB's guidance, federal departments and agencies responded to sequestration in a variety of ways, as noted in a recent report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO).¹ Nearly every agency studied by GAO limited employee training and travel. Most agencies used leftover funds from previous fiscal years to offset some of the mandated reductions. NASA slowed down development of the program that will allow the U.S. to stop relying on Russia for trips to the International Space Station. At the same time, NASA--like most agencies--did not furlough any employees. Similarly, the National Science Foundation reduced the number of new research awards, but did not furlough any employees. Almost no agencies directly reduced the number of staff. Only one agency--the U.S. Parole Commission--implemented a reduction in force of one employee "to achieve partial savings," according to GAO.²

To aid the understanding of the impact of sequestration on the federal workforce, please provide the following information by June 6, 2014:

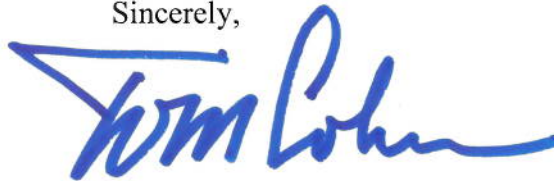
¹ "2013 Sequestration: Agencies Reduced Some Services and Investments, While Taking Certain Actions to Mitigate Effects," *Government Accountability Office*, March 2014.

² "2013 Sequestration: Agencies Reduced Some Services and Investments, While Taking Certain Actions to Mitigate Effects," *Government Accountability Office*, March 2014, pages 50-51.

1. Broken out by fiscal year, please provide the number of permanent, federal civilian employees for the last five years. Please include a breakdown by agency, position title, and pay scale.
2. Please provide a list of all departments or agencies that have implemented a reduction in force due to sequestration. Please list any impacted positions, by fiscal year, position title and pay scale.
3. Please provide electronic copies of any memoranda, guidance, or other documentation circulated by OMB advising federal agencies how to manage their federal workforces in response to sequestration.
4. What are the legal obstacles, if any, that hinder the executive agencies from making further reductions in workforce levels as they work to increase efficiency?
5. What is OMB's timeline for implementing GAO's recommendation that OMB publish the criteria used to determine the exemption status of program, projects, and activities?

I know we share the goal of ensuring federal resources are used as effectively as possible, and I look forward to working with your office to address these questions. Please do not hesitate to have your office reach out to Gabe Sudduth (202-224-5754) on my staff as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Coburn". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "T" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Tom A. Coburn, M.D.
Ranking Member