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September 14, 2017

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20015

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association and the 50 million students they serve, we urge you to VOTE NO on the Cotton amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 (H.R. 2810), which would eliminate sequestration cuts that enforce compliance with limits on discretionary spending. Votes associated with this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 115th Congress.

Although the amendment claims to end sequestration it actually leaves in place the sequestration limits on mandatory programs like Medicare, student loans, and programs of the Affordable Care Act. This amendment violates the principles outlined in the Budget Control Act (BCA), which requires equal treatment, or parity, in both defense and domestic spending programs. Under the BCA, parity applies to both mandatory and discretionary spending.

The Cotton amendment would open the door to raising defense spending with no protections to do the same for nondefense spending.

Getting rid of the mechanism to enforce the current, inadequate budget caps is not the right approach. The clear path forward is for Congress to raise the budget caps for both defense and nondefense programs. The current budget caps have had devastating impacts on both defense and nondefense programs for years.

Again, we urge you to Vote No on the Cotton amendment. Congress must work in a bipartisan fashion, as it did in 2013 and 2015, to come to an agreement on raising the caps, which will allow for the crucial investments we need to make for mandatory and discretionary programs.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations