KENT CONRAD, NORTH DAKOTA, CHAIRMAN

PATTY MURRAY, WASHINGTON
RON WYDEN, OREGON
BILL NELSON, FLORIDA
DEBBIE STABENOW, MICHIGAN
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, MARYLAND
BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, RHODE ISLAND
MARK R. WARNER, VIRGINIA
JEFF MERKLEY, OREGON
MARK BEGICH, ALASKA
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE

JEFF SESSIONS, ALABAMA
CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, IOWA
MICHAEL B. ENZI, WYOMING
MIKE CRAPO, IDAHO
JOHN CORNYN, TEXAS
LINDSEY O. GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
ROB PORTMAN, OHIO
PAT TOOMEY, PENNSYLVANIA
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
KELLY AYOTTE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

MARY ANN NAYLOR, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
MARCUS PEACOCK, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
www.budget.senate.gov

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6100

January 14, 2013

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murray:

We were pleased that you have indicated a desire to hold regular Budget Committee hearings. As you consider the agenda for the year, the Republican members would like for you to consider a vigorous hearing and mark-up schedule. The early part of the year is always busy for the Budget Committee and our current unsustainable debt path makes our work even more important. The suggested schedule we offer below would result in regular meetings and a timeline that leads to the completion of a budget resolution in accordance with the statutory requirements.

We believe the Budget Committee cannot be a bystander at this historic time when the nation will be confronting the most serious debt issues. We must take the steps necessary to avoid what Alan Simpson and Erskine Bowles have told our committee will be the "the most predictable economic crisis in history." The work of our committee, and the process of marking up a budget, will play an important role in helping the Congress and the nation find our way through this dangerous period.

We believe that an open, fact-driven analysis of our situation as part of the lawfully required budget process will be good for America. Our requests and suggestions are not for an easy schedule but for a challenging one. The people deserve no less. Substance must override politics.

We pledge to be active and positive contributors to this work. There will be clear policy differences, but what better place (or more important time) can there be to deal with them than in the committee that is charged with setting out a fiscal plan annually for the United States?

This schedule assumes, we must note, the formal marking-up of a budget as annually called for by the Budget Act of 1974. We believe that work on a Senate budget is an essential prerequisite of any fiscal reform that takes place this year.

There remains a strong desire among senators to serve on this committee because members still see it as the forum for meeting the great challenge of our time. Still, if our committee fails to do important work, its value will surely be diminished. That must not happen. We look forward to working with you and believe the following is an agenda that would allow us to fulfill the fundamental duties of the Budget Committee:

Week of . . .	Proposed Activity
January 22	Hearing—Economic Effects of the Federal Debt
January 28	Hearing—Status of the Congressional Budget Process
February 4	Hearing—CBO Economic and Budget Outlook
February 11	Hearing—Lessons in Fiscal Consolidation from Other Countries
February 18	*State Work Period*
February 25	Anticipating the release of President's FY 2014 Budget three weeks after the statutory deadline of February 4: Hearing—OMB Director Hearing—Secretary of Treasury
March 4	Continued review of President's FY 2014 Budget: Hearing—Secretary of Defense Hearing—Secretary of Health and Human Services Hearing—Secretary of Agriculture
March 11	Mark up FY 2014 Budget Resolution in Committee (statutory deadline April 1)
March 18	Debate FY 2014 Budget Resolution in Senate
March 25 and April 1	*State Work Period*
April 8	Debate FY 2014 Budget Resolution Conference Agreement in Senate (statutory deadline April 15)
April 15	Hearing—GAO Duplication Report
April 22	Hearing—Federal Employee Pay and Retirement
April 29	*State Work Period*
May 6	Hearing—Budgetary Issues Regarding Farm Bill Reauthorization
May 13	Hearing—The Federal Role in Enhancing America's Energy Future
May 20	Hearing—Financial Sustainability of the Highway Trust Fund
May 27	*State Work Period*
June 3	Hearing—Means-Tested Entitlements: Trends and Opportunities
June 10	Hearing—Using Competition to Reduce Health Care Cost
June 17	Hearing—Legislation referred to Committee (to be determined)
June 24	Hearing—Supplemental Security and Disability Income Reform
July 1	*State Work Period*
July 8	Hearing—CBO Long-Term Budget Outlook Hearing—Legislation referred to Committee (to be determined)
July 15	Hearing—Role of Health Care in the Long-Run Fiscal Imbalance
July 22	Hearing—CBO Analysis of Future Years' Defense Program Mark up legislation referred to Committee (to be determined)
July 29	Hearing—Immigration and Federal Assistance
August 5 through September 2	*State Work Period*
September 9	Hearing—Reducing Poverty and Dependency in America
September 16	Hearing—Incentives for Federal Employees to Improve Program Performance

September 23	Hearing – Trust Funds in the Federal Budget
September 30	Hearing – Postal Service Reform
October 7	Hearing – Legislation referred to Committee
October 14	*State Work Period*

There is no further schedule information for the Senate past the week of October 14, 2013, but additional hearings could be added as the Senate schedule becomes clearer.

Thank you for your consideration of these suggestions. We look forward to a productive year as we confront the extraordinary fiscal dangers threatening our country.

Very truly yours,

Jeff Sessions, Ranking Member

Rob Portman

Michael B. Enzi

Ron Johnson

Mike Crapo

Chuck Grassley

Kelly A. Ayotte

Pat Toomey