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United States Senate

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MICHAEL B. ENZI
WYOMING

COMMITTEES:

Finance
Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
Budget
Small Business

September 11, 2014

Dear Colleague,

I write to invite you to cosponsor S. 625, the *Biennial Appropriations Act*.

Once again, we find ourselves in circumstances that illustrate why we need to reform our budget and appropriations process. In less than a month, the new federal fiscal year begins, yet we have not passed a single of the 12 appropriations bills for the 2015 fiscal year. Our answer: another short-term continuing resolution. This is not the way the government should operate, nor does it meet the expectations of those who sent us to Washington to represent them.

Congress should debate each individual appropriations bill, vote on amendments, and pass all 12 separate bills. However, the last time we passed all appropriations bills separately before the start of the fiscal year was 20 years ago in 1994.

When we do not follow regular order, we cannot adequately consider the details, including a line-by-line look at individual programs and an analysis of appropriate funding levels.

My biennial appropriations bill would allow for each of the appropriation bills to be taken up over a two-year period, with the more controversial bills taken up in a non-election year and the less controversial bills taken up in an election year. The defense appropriations bill would be taken up each year. This would allow us to scrutinize spending details and eliminate duplication and waste.

Both parties have recognized the value of biennial budgeting. Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush endorsed the idea. In 2000, former OMB Director and now Treasury Secretary Jack Lew told the House Rules Committee:

I think biennial budgeting, if it is properly designed, could very much help alleviate these pressures. I think that beyond design we have to take very seriously and take a look at our own practices as both executive branch and legislative branch representatives and ask ourselves, can we make it work even if the rules are written right. I believe we can. I think we should try to and I applaud the committee for taking the step it has taken to advance the debate on this issue.

Let's move our appropriations process into the 21st century, providing the prudent oversight while guaranteeing a more secure future for the generations to come.

Re: sponsoring the *Biennial Appropriations Act*
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To cosponsor the bill, or if you have any questions regarding the *Biennial Appropriations Act*, please contact Bart Massey in my office at (202) 224-3424 or bart_massey@enzi.senate.gov.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael B. Enzi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael B. Enzi