



Federal Bar Association

February 19, 2013

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Chair, Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Frank Lautenberg
Chair, Subcommittee on Financial
Services and General Government
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johanns
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Financial
Services and General Government
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Ensure Adequate Funding for Our Federal Judiciary

Dear Senate Appropriations Leaders:

We write on behalf of the 16,000 lawyers and judges who belong to the Federal Bar Association to underscore the critical necessity of adequate funding for the Judicial Branch of our government.

As you strive to resolve sequestration and FY 2013 funding issues, we ask you to take into account the singularly important and Constitutional role that our federal courts perform. While total funding for the federal court system is relatively minute, its impact upon the administration of justice in our nation is profoundly large. Total funding for the Judicial Branch in Fiscal Year 2012 amounted to \$6.97 billion of a total budget of \$3.7 trillion, which means that for every taxpayer dollar only two-tenths of one penny went towards funding the entire co-equal third branch of our federal government. Yet funding at that level assures a judicial system that is second to none, as the Chief Justice noted in his recent year-end report. Those budgetary resources keep courts open, pay judges and staff, manage the criminal justice system, adjudicate civil disputes, and manage a national bankruptcy system. These functions are essential to the nation's welfare and respect for the rule of law.

Major reductions in federal court funding under sequestration could bring about a range of adverse consequences, diminish public safety and threaten economic recovery. For example, funding reductions could jeopardize the supervision of thousands of persons under pretrial release and convicted felons released from federal prisons, compromising public safety in communities across the nation. They also could bring about the

suspension of civil trials, which would impede business litigation, create uncertainty and delay, and thereby harm the nation's economy.


There can be no dispute that significant spending reductions for the Judicial Branch of our government will harm the administration of justice and the ability of the federal courts to carry out their Constitutional mission. We urge you to find a way to overcome differences and agree on an appropriate approach to long-term deficit reduction, while at the same time assuring the Judicial Branch is able to perform its important Constitutional responsibilities.

Thank you for your leadership and your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,



Karen Silberman
Executive Director



West Allen
Chair, Committee on Government Relations