



## U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

Washington, DC 20515

April 26, 2012

The Honorable Jeffrey Zients  
Acting Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Zients:

Yesterday, the House Budget Committee heard testimony from OMB about the administration's preparations – or more precisely, the administration's lack of the preparations for implementing the Budget Control Act. While I share the President's stated desire to avoid the sequester that is scheduled to occur under current law, the fact remains that Congress needs to fully understand how the administration would execute the sequester in the event that current law is not amended. I am writing to request that you provide the following information by May 4, 2012.

1. In a April 23, 2012 letter to GAO, OMB's deputy general counsel wrote that Section 255(b) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act exempts all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs from sequester, but that he was not "address[ing] other potential sequestration questions ... including the application to VA programs of the 'Federal Administrative Expenses' sequester provision." Under current law, will the accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs be reduced pursuant to the sequester required by law to occur on January 2, 2013?
2. In response to a question from Rep. Black, the OMB witness said that "the overseas contingency operations [account] is one of those activities that warrant further examination" as to whether it is subject to sequester. It is unconscionable that in the middle of combat operations, the administration has yet to determine whether the funds the troops rely on are subject to the sequester required by current law. Are funds designated by Congress for overseas contingency operations subject to sequester?
3. Please provide a listing of each budget account organized by its classification as exempt from a sequester (including the statutory basis for that exemption), non-exempt, or subject to a special rule in the event of sequestration (including the statutory basis for that special rule). Please provide this information in an editable spreadsheet.
4. Mr. Werfel testified that "at the appropriate time" OMB will review the application of the sequester required by current law. The House of Representatives has made clear its

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intention to move relevant legislation in May. In your judgment what is the appropriate time and what is the basis for your determination?

This information is vitally important as Congress develops legislation to replace the sequester. The administration's refusal to provide this information to date is simply irresponsible. I appreciate your prompt and complete response to this information request.

The staff contact for this information request is Jonathan Burks. He can be reached at 202-226-7270.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Ryan", written in a cursive style.

Paul D. Ryan  
Chairman