

## Statement from Co-Chairs of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction

**WASHINGTON**— Today, the Co-Chairs of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, Representative Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) and Senator Patty Murray, released the following statement.

"After months of hard work and intense deliberations, we have come to the conclusion today that it will not be possible to make any bipartisan agreement available to the public before the committee's deadline.

"Despite our inability to bridge the committee's significant differences, we end this process united in our belief that the nation's fiscal crisis must be addressed and that we cannot leave it for the next generation to solve. We remain hopeful that Congress can build on this committee's work and can find a way to tackle this issue in a way that works for the American people and our economy.

"We are deeply disappointed that we have been unable to come to a bipartisan deficit reduction agreement, but as we approach the uniquely American holiday of Thanksgiving, we want to express our appreciation to every member of this committee, each of whom came into the process committed to achieving a solution that has eluded many groups before us. Most importantly, we want to thank the American people for sharing thoughts and ideas and for providing support and good will as we worked to accomplish this difficult task.

"We would also like to thank our committee staff, in particular Staff Director Mark Prater and Deputy Staff Director Sarah Kuehl, as well as each committee member's staff for the tremendous work they contributed to this effort. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Douglas Elmendorf and Mr. Thomas Barthold and their teams at the Congressional Budget Office and Joint Committee on Taxation, respectively, for the technical support they provided to the committee and its members."

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### Statement by Speaker Boehner on the Announcement by Joint Select Committee Co-Chairs Jeb Hensarling & Patty Murray

**WASHINGTON, DC** – House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) issued the following statement on the announcement by Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction co-chairs Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) and Patty Murray (D-WA):

*"While I am disappointed, the House will forge ahead with the commitments we have made to reducing government spending and removing barriers standing in the way of private-sector job creation. Doing otherwise is not an option. This process did not end in the desired outcome, but it did bring our*

*enormous fiscal challenges into greater focus. I am confident the work done by this committee will play a role in the solution we must eventually find as a nation.*

*“I commend both of the panel's leaders, Jeb Hensarling and Patty Murray, for the dignified and statesmanlike manner in which the committee carried out its difficult negotiations. I want to particularly thank Jeb for the principled leadership and love of country he consistently has demonstrated in leading Republicans on the Joint Select Committee, as well as Dave Camp and Fred Upton for the countless hours they invested in this process for a noble cause.”*

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## **Pelosi Statement on Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction**

*Washington, D.C. – Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi released the following statement today after the Co-Chairs of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, Senator Patty Murray and Representative Jeb Hensarling, announced that the committee did not reach a bipartisan agreement:*

“Americans demanded and Democrats repeatedly supported a big, bold, and balanced plan to reduce our deficit and grow our economy.

“The plan could not be balanced because Republicans insisted on extending the Bush tax cuts for people making more than a million dollars a year and repealing the Medicare guarantee – while refusing to accept a jobs proposal. By rejecting a balanced approach, Republicans chose to keep their pledge to Grover Norquist to protect the wealthiest one percent at all costs.

“House Democrats are grateful to our appointees – Assistant Democratic Leader James E. Clyburn, Democratic Caucus Vice Chair Xavier Becerra and Budget Committee Ranking Member Chris Van Hollen – for their leadership and willingness to make the tough choices to achieve a big, bold, and balanced plan.”

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## **REID STATEMENT ON JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE**

*Washington, D.C. - Nevada Senator Harry Reid released the following statement today.*

“The American people are tired of their elected leaders listening to the extreme voices in their party instead of the voices of reason. I am disappointed that Republicans never found the courage to ignore Tea Party extremists and millionaire lobbyists like Grover Norquist, and listen instead to the overwhelming majority of Americans – including the vast majority of Republicans – who want a balanced approach to deficit reduction. For the good of our country, Democrats were prepared to strike a grand bargain that would make painful cuts while asking millionaires to pay their fair share, and we put our willingness on paper. But Republicans never came close to meeting us halfway.

“Instead, Republicans relentlessly sought to end Medicare as we know it by privatizing the program and putting seniors and future generations at the mercy of insurance companies. In addition, Republicans insisted on expanding President Bush’s tax giveaways to millionaires, an approach that would have made our deficit problems bigger, not smaller, while increasing the gap between the top one percent of taxpayers and everyone else. Democrats are open to reforming our tax code, but we will not go along with efforts to provide even more giveaways to millionaires at the expense of the middle class.

“Make no mistake: we will achieve the more than \$2 trillion in deficit reduction we agreed to in August. The sequester was designed to be painful, and it is. But that is the commitment to fiscal responsibility that both parties made to the American people. In the absence of a balanced plan that would reduce the deficit by at least as much, I will oppose any efforts to change or roll back the sequester.

“I commend Senators Murray, Baucus and Kerry for their unflagging commitment to this process. They worked until the final hours to try and forge a reasonable compromise, and validated the trust that I placed in each of them to seek a balanced deal while protecting the fundamental guarantees of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

“With millions of Americans out of work, we must stay focused on creating jobs. Economists have estimated that failing to extend the payroll tax cuts for the middle class and provide support to Americans who continue to look for jobs in this tough economy could plunge us back into a recession. Democrats will continue to pursue these kinds of common-sense, bipartisan proposals to put Americans back to work. In the weeks ahead, I hope the fear of the Tea Party and millionaire lobbyists like Grover Norquist will not prevent Republicans from forging common-sense compromises with Democrats to get our economy back on track.”

## **Camp Statement on Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction**

Washington, DC – Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI), Ways and Means Committee Chairman and member of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, released the following statement:

“America is facing a debt and jobs crisis. Congress must stop out-of-control spending, strengthen our economy and secure entitlement programs sooner, not later. It is deeply regrettable that my Democrat colleagues could not see their way to addressing these much needed reforms without at least \$1 trillion in job-killing tax increases on families and employers. The failure of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction is a serious disappointment. However, I will redouble my efforts as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee to enact pro-growth tax reform that makes our tax code simpler, fairer and more competitive to generate the economic

growth and jobs America needs.”

## **Kerry on Debt Panel Outcome**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.) today made the following statement after an announcement by co-chairs Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-Texas) that the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction was unable to reach an agreement on a plan to reduce the deficit by at least \$1.2 trillion:

“I’m deeply disappointed with this outcome. We all are. This was an historic moment to do something big, bold, and balanced that demanded shared sacrifice to put our country first. Everyone worked hard and everyone wanted success.

“It’s too easy just to say that Washington is broken or Congress is broken. But telling the truth about how we got here is the only way to ensure we put our country on the right course. These issues aren’t going away; in fact they are becoming more urgent.

“There is an enormous ideological divide in politics today, and today’s outcome underscores the rigidity and unwillingness of forces outside of Congress to allow for rational consensus.

“Democrats on the Committee made clear everything was on the table. Our offers were balanced. We walked the line of shared sacrifice, however difficult, and we proposed painful choices for programs we care about deeply.

“However, we simply could not overcome the Republican insistence on making tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans permanent. We would not give another \$550 billion tax cut to the wealthiest. Shifting the tax burden to the middle class was not the way to reduce the deficit. This was simply doctrine for some of our Republican colleagues, even as many worked very hard in good faith to find a better way forward. I believe it would have been unconscionable to ask middle class Americans to finance more tax cuts for the wealthy while seniors on fixed incomes paid the price. People need to remember: The Committee was created to cut the deficit not to cut taxes for the wealthiest, the exact tax policies that didn’t create jobs and gave us deficits in the first place. The bottom line is that no Super Committee can succeed with Grover Norquist as its 13th member.

I believe this was a moment for American leadership, and from day one we urged the Committee to go big and reach the \$4 trillion mark. Certain elements of the Republican Party were unwilling to put tax revenue on the table, and no deal without it can be fair.

“This challenge of deficit reduction remains. We still have a jobs deficit and growing budget deficit and now we have an even greater deficit of public trust in Americans’ belief that Congress can make adult decisions. It didn’t have to be this way. Perhaps the awful reality of across the

board budget cuts in key priorities will finally sober everyone up. We must spend the next year figuring out how to arrive at a balanced and fair solution for our country.”

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## **STATEMENT BY SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN KENT CONRAD (D-ND) ON INABILITY OF JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE TO REACH AGREEMENT**

**Washington** - “While it is disappointing the Joint Committee was unable to reach agreement on a deficit reduction plan, it is not the end of the story. The fiscal challenge remains and has to be dealt with. A balanced and fair package has to include both entitlement and tax reforms that lower spending and raise revenue.

“A bipartisan, comprehensive, and balanced deficit reduction plan must be enacted. Fortunately, there is a strong and growing block of support in Congress for such a plan. Already, more than 100 Members of the House and 45 Members of the Senate have expressed their desire to reach agreement on a bipartisan plan that truly puts our fiscal house in order.

“We need to build on that support and continue to push for a bipartisan agreement that can pass Congress and reach the President’s desk. The key remains finding a compromise with the right mix of entitlement and tax reforms. The nation’s future economic strength and security depends on our ability to bridge our differences and solve this problem.” ###

## **STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LEON E. PANETTA ON SUPERCOMMITTEE NEGOTIATIONS NOVEMBER 21, 2011**

The failure of the Congressional Supercommittee to reach an agreement on deficit reduction is a setback for the country's efforts to achieve fiscal responsibility while protecting our national security. If Congress fails to act over the next year, the Department of Defense will face devastating, automatic, across-the-board cuts that will tear a seam in the nation's defense.

Despite the danger posed by sequestration, I join the President in his call for Congress to avoid an easy way out of this crisis. Congress cannot simply turn off the sequester mechanism, but instead must pass deficit reduction at least equal to the \$1.2 trillion it was charged to pass under the Budget Control Act.

In my four decades involved with public service, I have never been more concerned about the ability of Congress to forge common-sense

solutions to the nation's pressing problems. Since becoming Secretary of Defense, I have made it clear that the Department has a responsibility to help the country get its fiscal house in order - and we are doing that. I have been leading a strategy-driven effort to achieve the more than \$450 billion in cuts over 10 years required by the Budget Control Act. We will move ahead with that plan.

But as Secretary of Defense, my primary responsibility is to protect the security of the nation. The half-trillion in additional cuts demanded by sequester would lead to a hollow force incapable of sustaining the missions it is assigned. If implemented, sequester would also jeopardize our ability to provide our troops and their families with the benefits and the support they have been promised. Our troops deserve better, and our nation demands better.

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