

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2011

Dear Colleague:

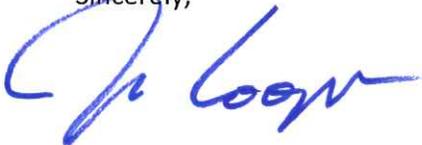
On Friday June 3, 2011, the co-chairs of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, Erskine Bowles and Senator Alan Simpson, wrote an op-ed for the *Washington Post*, "The Gang of Six is our Best Shot." They called on lawmakers to support the Gang of Six efforts stating that it offers the "last, best hope for a comprehensive bipartisan deficit reduction agreement" this Congress. The Gang of Six has based their work off of the Bowles-Simpson plan, which is why it is important their discussions not only continue, but they have our bipartisan support.

Never has there been a more important time in our nation's history to come together to rein in our wasteful spending, stop playing favorites with the tax code, and put everything on the table. In April, Standard & Poor's cut the U.S. ratings outlook to "negative," due to the uncertainty over budget deficits and the debt ceiling. Just last week, Moody's warned it may also downgrade the U.S. ratings outlook to "negative" as early as next month. We should be able to reduce spending, and raise the debt ceiling, without defaulting on our debt. The consequences of failure are unacceptable.

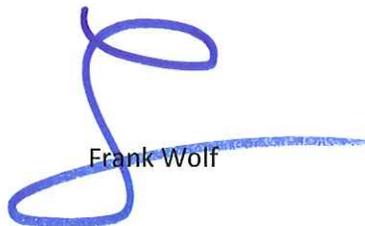
It is common political posturing for Democrats and Republicans to blame each other for acquiring this debt, but neither side can cast stones. Both are guilty of making new promises we can't pay for, and tax breaks we can't afford. It is time to stop using the deficit as a political weapon, and come together to find bipartisan solutions. The Bowles-Simpson plan is bitter medicine, and while not perfect could restore our fiscal health. There is never a convenient time to make tough decisions, but the longer we put off fixing the problem, the worse the medicine will be.

Messrs. Bowles and Simpson go on to say, "Members of both parties and both houses must publicly support the work of the Gang of Six. This is the time for heroes." We couldn't agree more.

Sincerely,



Jim Cooper



Frank Wolf