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May 4, 2011

The Honorable Senator Jon Kyl
Assistant Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Kyl:

In anticipation of your May 5, 2011 meeting to discuss our nation's deficit and debt crisis, we write to offer our support and encouragement in restoring fiscal responsibility. In order to reestablish sustainable levels of federal spending, elected officials must be honest with the American people and make clear that our longstanding failure to curb deficit spending, and the frequent need to raise the debt ceiling to accommodate profligate spending, simply cannot continue. Americans of all political persuasions overwhelmingly join us in demanding that the federal government not continue with business as usual and request yet another national line of credit in order to spend beyond our means.

Beyond the immediate need to reduce federal spending, we must demonstrate to the American people and signal to global financial markets a willingness to address our nation's budget crisis with structural and permanent reforms. Past experience has taught statutory spending controls are ultimately ineffective in establishing long-term fiscal discipline.

Now is the time to pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution that limits spending as a percentage of annual GDP and precludes raising the debt ceiling without a super-majority vote in both houses of Congress.

Those who insist that raising the debt ceiling is unavoidable—and that failing to raise it would be dangerous—fail to acknowledge the critical dangers that accompany continual increases in our nation's debt limit. Gross federal debt has grown from 64 percent to 93 percent of GDP in the last few years alone. Debt accumulation of this rate and of this magnitude send alarming signals to financial markets that our country lacks serious economic leadership, resulting in an impaired national credit outlook, crowding out of much needed private investment, and persistent unemployment. Without a meaningful change of course, our current economic path will lead to serious consequences in the form of double-digit inflation and skyrocketing interest rates.

To address this crisis honestly and effectively we must pass the Hatch-Lee balanced budget amendment before raising the debt ceiling. Unless and until that measure passes both houses of Congress, we will vigorously oppose any attempt to raise the debt ceiling.

We look forward to working with you on immediate, decisive and bold steps to establish fiscal responsibility and put our country back on stable financial ground.