



January 29, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader McConnell:

As governors of states and territories across this nation, we have a keen interest in the legislation you will move forward in the 114<sup>th</sup> session of Congress. We believe that the budget and appropriations bills, as well as regulatory reform initiatives, provide an opportunity for Congress to restore balance between the states (to include US territories) and federal government. We are convinced that if states would be provided greater flexibility and control of funds and regulatory authority over a multitude of programs, we would be able to better and more efficiently serve the needs of our citizens. We stand ready to work with you as legislation is drafted and moves through the legislative process.

Over the last several decades, the federal government has passed laws and promulgated regulations that restrict the ability of states to innovate while requiring states to implement and run programs dictated by federal dollars and rules. For a long time states were willing to trade off power and responsibility for federal taxpayer funds, but we have reached a tipping point where states serve to carry out the wishes of the federal government instead of serving as laboratories of democracy.

When states try to improve our programs that are funded in part by federal taxpayer revenue, we have to navigate a complex web of federal regulations and needless federal micro-management. When we need to build or repair a road, we have to wait for federal approval and comply with outdated restrictions to use taxpayer dollars that are generated in our states. To provide a better

education system, we have to plead for waivers from federal regulations. When we want to harvest energy sources in our states, we must comply with extensive, restrictive, expensive, often time unworkable EPA policies that are often at odds with our own states' initiatives to protect the environment. And when it comes to helping our most vulnerable neighbors, we are beholden to federal requirements that slow down our ability to efficiently and effectively serve and funnel funding from services to administration.

President Ronald Reagan said once, "In many respects, the Federal Government is still operating on the outdated and, if I may say so, arrogant assumption that the States can't manage their own affairs." We have confidence in our states' ability to manage our affairs, and we want to work with you to change the federal budget, appropriations and regulatory processes to allow states greater flexibility and increased authority.

Providing states funding through block grants will afford states the opportunity to innovate and the flexibility needed to serve our citizens as effectively and efficiently as possible. Limiting the authority of the executive departments to impose a myriad of mandates will prevent interference with our states' programs. We firmly believe that increased state autonomy will reap benefits in critical areas such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, energy, environment, and employment.

The principle of federalism ingrained in the Constitution must be restored, and we encourage you to devolve back to the states the ability to run programs, make decisions, and develop innovative solutions. We are prepared to take back those powers reserved to the states and would like to work with you to determine programs, funding, and responsibility that could be shifted to the states. Many of us will be in Washington in February for the annual National Governors Association meeting, and we would like to request a meeting with you at that time, or another mutually convenient time, to discuss this in greater detail.

We wish you much success in the 114th Congress and thank you for your service to the nation.

Sincerely,



Governor Robert Bentley  
Alabama



Governor Douglas A. Ducey  
Arizona



Governor Asa Hutchinson  
Arkansas



Governor Nathan Deal  
Georgia



Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Idaho



Governor Bruce Rauner  
Illinois



Governor Michael R. Pence  
Indiana



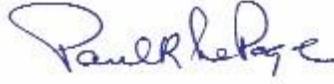
Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Iowa



Governor Sam Brownback  
Kansas



Governor Bobby Jindal  
Louisiana



Governor Paul R. LePage  
Maine



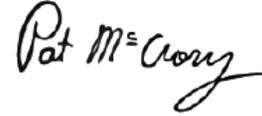
Governor Rick Snyder  
Michigan



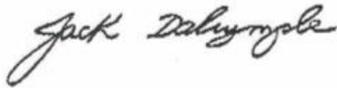
Governor Phil Bryant  
Mississippi



Governor Pete Ricketts  
Nebraska



Governor Pat McCrory  
North Carolina



Governor Jack Dalrymple  
North Dakota



Governor Mary Fallin  
Oklahoma



Governor Nikki Haley  
South Carolina



Governor Dennis Daugaard  
South Dakota



Governor Bill Haslam  
Tennessee



Governor Greg Abbott  
Texas



Governor Gary R. Herbert  
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Governor Scott Walker  
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Governor Matthew H. Mead  
Wyoming



Governor Edward J. Baza Calvo  
Guam