



a program of United Spinal Association

September 14, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Co-Chair  
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

VetsFirst, a program of United Spinal Association, wishes to congratulate you on your selection as co-chair of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. As the committee begins the difficult task of evaluating proposals to reduce the deficit, VetsFirst believes that the committee must carefully consider the impact any reductions would have on programs that assist veterans with disabilities.

Veterans with disabilities must be assured that veterans disability compensation and pension benefits will be safeguarded. Veterans must also have continued access to quality Department of Veterans Affairs provided health care. Access to cutting edge prosthetics and orthotics, caregiver benefits, and veteran-directed home and community based services must be improved, not reduced, to meet the needs of veterans of the current and past conflicts. Although opportunities for improved administrative efficiencies may exist in these programs, VetsFirst urges the committee to consider the impact of any proposed administrative cuts on service delivery to veterans, particularly in light of the claims backlog.

Veterans with disabilities also benefit from programs that assist all people with disabilities. Employment, housing and transportation programs are critical to ensuring that veterans with the most significant disabilities are able to remain active members of their communities. VetsFirst believes that short-term savings must not be exchanged for longer-term costs that result from eliminating these services. Our nation's veterans must have access to services that allow them to reintegrate into their communities after sacrificing for our nation.

We appreciate your continuing leadership on issues impacting our nation's veterans. If you have any questions, please contact Heather Ansley, Director of Veterans Policy, at (202) 556-2076, ext. 7702 or by e-mail at [hansley@vetsfirst.org](mailto:hansley@vetsfirst.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul J. Tobin".

Paul J. Tobin  
President and CEO

