

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 8, 2013

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write today regarding all of our bipartisan commitments to the security of the United States and America's interests. We believe that you share our commitment that the protection of American lives and national security is our first and foremost responsibility. It is a nonpartisan issue and must rise above political considerations.

We are concerned by the cessation of vital national security functions, and the furloughing of key personnel, which have occurred during this lapse in appropriations. Director of National Intelligence Clapper stated that roughly 70 percent of the Intelligence Community has been shuttered and "that this [threat] will accumulate over time [and] the damage will be insidious." Under Secretary of State Sherman further elaborated in testimony that sanctions monitoring and enforcement at the Departments of Treasury and State "has been completely, virtually, utterly depleted in this time."

We ask that you move expeditiously to deem all U.S. government personnel and contractors with a national security mission, or supporting a national security mission, "essential personnel" and have them report to their duty stations immediately. At a minimum this should include all members of the Intelligence Community, all Department of Defense (DOD) Civilians, the National Guard, DOD Reserve Components, Homeland Security, federal law enforcement, and sanctions enforcement personnel.

The bipartisan passage of H.R. 3210, the Pay Our Military Act, is just one example of both parties rising above politics to safeguard this country. We are confident your Administration and the Legislative Branch can find others. Should you believe that you lack the authority to deem all National Security personnel essential, we ask that you enumerate the authorities you lack and we will immediately pursue passage of legislation on a fast track basis that will provide you any authority you believe you need to perform these key National Security functions. We are willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure the security of the United States even though we have other political differences during this difficult period. Doing so is not only the necessary and proper thing to do but also honors our nonpartisan commitment to do all we can at all times to protect those who have entrusted this sacred responsibility to us.

We appreciate your immediate consideration of this important and urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Bill McCannell

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Dan Coats

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Paul Cochran

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