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March 19, 2013

Director John Berry
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20415

Dear Director Berry:

I write to bring to your attention an issue of concern for federal workers in Maine, and across the nation, who are directly affected by the spending cuts due to sequestration that went into effect on March 1st. The ripple effects could have ramifications as they relate to the security clearances that are held by federal employees.

In Maine, there are more than 16,000 federal workers, 4,700 of which work at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Many of these hard-working men and women require security clearances to maintain their federal positions. The projected furloughs translate to a 20 percent salary decrease for many workers, which will impose a significant negative impact on their family finances and could result in missed payments on debts, such as car and mortgage payments.

If these federal employees fall into debt, their security clearances could be revoked, costing them their jobs and further undermining mission critical work. I understand the reason a security clearance could be revoked for an employee who is in financial trouble because of decisions he or she made. In these unusual circumstances, however, employees may have financial difficulties due to the unexpected impact of sequestration.

Given the significant impact the loss of security clearances could have on these employees and on our national security, I ask that absent a national security risk, you refrain from revoking the workers' clearances based solely on the financial debts related directly to the impact of the furlough delays mandated by sequestration.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United State Senator