



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 26 2013

The Honorable James Lankford  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lankford:

Thank you for your letter of April 23, 2013, concerning the impact that the potential furlough of civilian Department of Defense employees will have on our mission and our people, as well as impacts on temporary and term employees and new hires.

The Department faces many national security challenges around the world and must address those challenges at a time of profound budget uncertainty. As you know, prior to passage of H.R. 933, the Department was considering up to 22 furlough days for this fiscal year. Following the passage of H.R. 933, the Department is now considering furloughs of up to 14 days. We are still working through this issue in the hopes of minimizing the impact of sequester, including furloughs, on our readiness and our people. The Department has been clear for over a year on the damage that sequester would do to our enterprise. We are examining every option for responsible cuts in order to minimize or possibly eliminate the necessity of furloughs. However, furloughs may be necessary during sequester to assure that the funding for our warfighters and readiness meet mission requirements.

While I appreciate your request to allow Services the maximum flexibility to determine civilian furlough numbers, DOD's most important responsibility is national security. In reallocating resources throughout the Department to the highest national security priorities, we will strive for consistency and fairness across the Department. We will have to reduce spending on service contracts as well as functions performed by civilians. And, we will continue to consider policies that minimize adverse effects of sequester on mission readiness. But the fact remains that we are required to cut approximately \$40 billion from our budget over the next six months, and there is no way to do that without damage to our operations, our people, and our institution. In order to minimize the impact of sequester, including furloughs, we need the help of Congress, especially in approving reprogrammings.

I will make a decision on furloughs soon.

Thank you for your continued support.

Handwritten signature of Chuck Hagel in black ink, with a horizontal line underneath.