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United States Senate

Senator Tom Coburn, MD

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

RANKING MEMBER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION

May 11, 2010

Dear Colleague,

I appreciate your support for the effort to pay for the \$18 billion cost of H.R. 4851, the Continuing Extension Act of 2010 approved by the Senate earlier this month. I am once again asking for your support to pay for the cost of legislation expected to be considered by Congress in the coming weeks.

The Senate is expected to consider yet another "emergency" spending bill in the coming weeks. The bill could cost as much as \$70 billion and will contain the annual supplemental war appropriations as well as tens of billions of dollars for a variety of other unrelated purposes, none of which will be paid for with reductions in other federal spending. Without question, we must fully meet the needs of our military men and women with the equipment and supplies they need to win and return home. But we must do so responsibly, by offsetting the full cost of the war efforts with cuts to lower-priority federal spending.

As you know, on February 12, 2010, President Obama signed into law the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act (PAYGO). In the weeks following its enactment, the Senate has repeatedly ignored the spirit of PAYGO by borrowing \$173 billion to cover the costs of new spending rather than paying for it by cutting lower priority spending. Just over a year ago, the national debt was \$10.6 trillion. Today, it is \$12.9 trillion, and every American owes more than \$41,000.

With the federal government borrowing 43 cents for every dollar we spend, our spending is on an unsustainable course. I will, therefore, do everything I can to ensure Congress pays for the annual supplemental spending bill and plan to offer an amendment to offset the full amount of the legislation. I am open to all offset suggestions and would appreciate your support when the pay for amendment is put before the Senate for a vote.

Time and time again, Congress waits until the last minute to consider important legislation and then declares the billions of dollars in costs as "emergency" as a way to avoid making the tough decisions required to pay for the price tag. Congress can continue to borrow billions of dollars by declaring a bill an emergency to avoid paying for it today, but eventually the cost must be paid. Our nation's \$12.9 trillion debt is endangering our financial recovery, the future of our children and grandchildren who will be left paying for the bills we are incurring today, our national security, and the very freedoms of men and women in uniform are fighting to protect and preserve. That is why the real "emergency spending" is this type of irresponsible spending that is creating a true emergency for the future of our nation.

Again, I appreciate your support in the past and I hope I can count on you again as I do whatever I can to help restore fiscal discipline in Washington by forcing Congress to pay for the costs of all new spending.

Sincere Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom", with a large, sweeping flourish above the letters.

Tom A Coburn, M.D.
U.S. Senator