



September 25, 2013

Dear AAG Members:

We are writing regarding **sequestration** - a set of steep automatic across-the-board Federal budget cuts that have been in effect since March 1 - and the potential for its continuation and the prolonged negative impact that would have on geography research and education as well as science and education funding more broadly. On February 13, we sent you a message ([http://www.aag.org/galleries/govt-relations/Sequestration\\_message.pdf](http://www.aag.org/galleries/govt-relations/Sequestration_message.pdf)) calling attention to concerns about sequestration and asking you to share your views on the issue with your members of Congress.

With Congress currently engaged in a Fiscal Year-end budget battle, we now urge you to again contact your Senators and Representative to express your views or concerns about the impacts of sequestration.

Furthermore, many in our discipline are aware that a possible Federal shutdown would hinder the ability of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and other research agencies to fund worthy and important projects and programs. If a shutdown occurs, geographers and colleagues throughout the university and at Federal agencies would be impacted negatively.

Beyond fears of sequestration and a shutdown, a few other specific issues that may concern geographers in the coming weeks are:

- **The Coburn Amendment** - In March, Congress passed an amendment that restricts the ability of NSF to fund political science research. The AAG has worked closely with our colleagues at the American Political Science Association and within the wider science community in an effort to undo the potential damage of this provision, known as the Coburn Amendment.
- **Funding for the Social and Behavioral Sciences broadly** - In addition to the Coburn Amendment, other proposals have been floated on Capitol Hill that would cut funding for the full range of social and behavioral sciences. The science and higher-education communities have strongly opposed these proposals and we at the AAG and many other organizations continue to provide information and education on the value of research in these disciplines.
- **Attempts to undercut the Merit-Review Process** - Some members of Congress have discussed introducing a bill that would undermine the merit-review process that is used for grant awards at NSF and other funding agencies. We have long coordinated closely with the Coalition for National Science

Funding, the Consortium of Social Science Associations, and many other groups in expressing our opposition to any such legislation.

You can find continually-updated, additional information about some of these and other related topics on the AAG website at: [http://www.aag.org/social\\_science\\_funding](http://www.aag.org/social_science_funding)

The links below provide information about contacting members of Congress through the phone or internet. AAG members may also wish to use social media, such as Twitter or Facebook, to share their perspectives with elected officials, friends, colleagues, and the wider community.

Contact information for all U.S. Senators can be found at:  
[http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm).

You can locate your member of the House of Representatives by going to:  
<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact John Wertman, the AAG's Senior Program Manager for Government Relations, at [jwertman@aag.org](mailto:jwertman@aag.org), or Doug Richardson, AAG Executive Director, at [drichardson@aag.org](mailto:drichardson@aag.org).

Thank you,  
Douglas Richardson and John Wertman