November 5, 2013

Dear Senator:

As the U.S. Senate debates spending priorities and the budget sequester this fall, the 538 organizations listed below believe raising revenue by closing unjustified tax loopholes used by the wealthy and corporations should be at the top of every lawmaker’s list.

President Obama and Congress have already cut $1.8 trillion in spending (including interest) and raised just $600 billion in new tax revenues. That’s $3 in cuts for every $1 in new revenue, an outcome that is neither balanced nor fair. Meanwhile, corporations have not contributed a dime to reduce the deficit and no corporate tax loopholes have been closed.

We write to express our strong support for the Stop Tax Haven Abuse Act (S. 1533) – introduced by Senators Carl Levin (D-MI), Mark Begich (D-AK), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) – ask that you become a co-sponsor of this important legislation. It would raise $220 billion over ten years by closing numerous tax loopholes that encourage U.S. corporations to move jobs, profits and operations offshore and avoid paying their fair share of taxes. Congress is facing tough choices about our government’s budget, but these loopholes should be considered easy targets.

Passage of this legislation is critical for several reasons:

- **Corporations should pay their fair share of taxes.** Large American corporations – such as American Express, Apple, Dell, Eli Lilly, Microsoft, Nike – hold their profits in offshore tax havens because they are taxed very little or not at all. The cost to taxpayers of offshore tax-avoidance by corporations is estimated to be nearly $100 billion a year, according to academic experts. All told, U.S. companies have almost $2 trillion in profits offshore, much of it in tax havens where they conduct no real business, but have set up a shell company that is often nothing more than a P.O. Box. In fact, 18,857 corporate entities are registered at one modest five-story building in the Cayman Islands.

- **By closing some of the most egregious offshore tax loopholes, S. 1533 would save taxpayers $220 billion – enough to replace the next round of budget sequester cuts, invest in America and improve our nation’s finances.** The Congressional Budget Office estimates we will lose another 800,000 jobs in 2014 due to the $110 billion in new cuts to benefits and services under the sequester. Our economy – and our families – cannot afford that.

- **America should stop giving corporations tax subsidies to export jobs.** Multinational corporations are currently allowed to indefinitely “defer” paying U.S. taxes on their foreign profits, and this tax loophole acts as a powerful incentive to shift profits and jobs overseas. The Levin bill does not go so far as to repeal the tax deferral loophole, as would a
bill introduced by Sen. Sanders (S. 250) that would raise $583 billion over the next decade. However, enactment of S. 1533 would be an important step in limiting incentives for multinational corporations to shift jobs and profits offshore.

- **We need to level the playing field between big corporations and small businesses.** Tax-haven abuse by large multinational corporations puts small businesses – and even large domestic firms – at a competitive disadvantage in the marketplace. Along with individual taxpayers, they must shoulder the additional tax bill or face a reduction in public services that they depend on. The average small business would pay an extra $3,000 a year to cover the cost of offshore tax dodging by large corporations, according to a U.S. PIRG report. Middle class workers and small businesses that play by the rules and take responsibility for paying their fair share should not have to subsidize companies like Apple and Nike.

Fortunately, the Stop Tax Haven Abuse Act would close many of the tax avoidance loopholes commonly used by some of America’s largest and most profitable companies. For example:

- Apple made profits of $74 billion from 2009-2012 on worldwide sales (excluding the Americas) and paid virtually nothing in taxes to any country, according to the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI). The sales were attributed to Irish subsidiaries, where the companies paid a tax rate of less than 1%.
- Microsoft avoided paying at least $6.5 billion in U.S. taxes from 2009 to 2011 using offshore tax loopholes, according to the U.S. Senate PSI.
- Hewlett-Packard essentially funded its operations for four years, tax-free, by using two offshore subsidiaries—in Belgium and the Cayman Islands—that made alternating short-term loans of billions of dollars to the parent company, according to the U.S. Senate PSI.
- Nike has $6.7 billion in profits “permanently reinvested” in shell companies overseas, on which it has paid zero U.S. income taxes and paid practically no foreign tax as well, according to the nonpartisan research organization Citizens for Tax Justice.

Cracking down on offshore tax abuses should be at the top of the congressional “to do” list. Closing these loopholes can provide a means to replace the sequester, reform the tax code, reduce the deficit and rebuild roads and bridges. Please stand with us by co-sponsoring the Stop Tax Haven Abuse Act to ensure that corporations begin to pay their fair share of taxes.

Sincerely,

9to5Academics Stand Against Poverty
AFL-CIO
AFL-CIO Department of Professional Employees
AchieveOurDreams.org
Action for the Common Good
Alliance for a Just Society
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Federation of Government Employees
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American Friends Service Committee
American Sustainable Business Council
Americans for Democratic Action
Americans for Tax Fairness
Business for Shared Prosperity
Campaign for America’s Future
Campaign for Community Change
Center for American Progress
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Effective Government
Center for Popular Democracy
Citizens for Tax Justice
Children’s Defense Fund
Coalition on Human Needs
Color of Change
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Partnership
CourageCampaign.org
Croatan Institute
Daily Kos
Democracy for America
Demos
Domini Social Investments
Economic Policy Institute
EG Justice
Every Child Matters Education Fund
Fair Share
Faith in Public Life
Financial Accountability & Corporate Transparency (FACT) Coalition
Food and Water Watch
Franciscan Action Network
Friends of the Earth
Gamaliel
Global Financial Integrity
Government Accountability Project
Health Care for America Now
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
In the Public Interest
Jobs with Justice
Jubilee USA Network
Lake Research Partners
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Librarian’s Guild
Main Street Alliance
Missionary Oblates
MomsRising
MoveOn.org Civic Action
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance of HUD Tenants
National Association of Social Workers
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Women’s Organizations
National Education Association
National Immigration Law Center
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National People’s Action
National Priorities Project
National Treasury Employees Union
National Women’s Law Center
NETWORK: A Catholic Social Justice Lobby
New Rules for Global Finance
Oblates of Mary Immaculate
Oxfam America
P.H. Balanced Films
Partnership for Working Families
People For the American Way
Progressive Asset Management
Progressive Democrats of America
Progressive States Network
Progressives United
Promise the Children
Public Citizen
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
Rebuild the Dream
Responsible Wealth
RESULTS
Service Employees International Union
Spring Water Asset Management
Sum of Us
Tax Justice Network
The Arc
The Every Child Matters Education Fund
United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, International Union
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America
United for a Fair Economy
United Steelworkers
U.S. Public Interest Research Group
USAAction
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- United Transportation Union
- Vote Vets

Connecticut
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- Connecticut Association of Nonprofits
- Connecticut Citizen Action Group
- Connecticut Common Cause
- Connecticut Education Association
- Connecticut PIRG
- Connecticut Working Families Party
- Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut
- National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter

Delaware
- 32BJ SEIU
- Americans for Democratic Action, Delaware Chapter
- Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Delaware Chapter
- Delaware AFL-CIO
- Delaware Alliance for Community Advancement
- Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families
- Delaware State Education Association
- Latin American Community Center
- National Association of Social Workers; Delaware Chapter
- National Organization for Women, Delaware Chapter
- Pacem in Terris
- Progressive Democrats for Delaware
- Progressive Democrats of Sussex County
- Public Employees Council 81 AFSCME
- The Delaware Community Reinvestment Action Council, Inc.
- The Interdenominational Ministers Action Council of DE

Florida
- Awake Pinellas
- Center for Independent Living of S. Florida, Inc.
- Community Business Association
- Farmworker Association of Florida
- Florida AFSCME Council 79
- Florida Alliance for Retired Americans
- Florida Center for Fiscal and Economic Policy
- Florida Chain
- Florida Consumer Action Network
- Florida PIRG
- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, Central FL
- NAACP, St. Petersburg Chapter
- Organize Now
- Progress Florida
- SEIU Florida
Florida
South Florida Voices for Working Families

Florida
United Chinese Association of Florida

Georgia
9 to 5 Atlanta

Georgia
Atlanta North Georgia Labor Council

Georgia
Coffee Party Savannah

Georgia
Georgia Fair Share

Georgia
Georgia Public Interest Research Group

Georgia
Georgia Rural/Urban Summit

Georgia
Georgia Student Justice Alliance

Georgia
Georgia Women's Action for New Directions

Georgia
MoveOn Atlanta

Georgia
MoveOn Gwinnett

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National Council of Jewish Women, Atlanta Section

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Let’s Move Michiana

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Move On. Org Michiana Chapter

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North Central Indiana AFL-CIO

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Northern Indiana Americans for Democratic Action

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