HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

JOHN CONYERS, JR.

April 28, 2010

The Honorable Erskine Bowles
Co-Chair, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Alan Simpson
Co-Chair, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Chairmen Bowles and Simpson:

We write to request that the process that will govern the work of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform is fully transparent and highly inclusive, in keeping with the pledge of openness made by the Administration.

The recommendations that you and your colleagues on the Commission will craft this year will impact every single American. This body will make suggestions about how our country allocates its resources – whether and how to invest in health care, our social safety net, education, clean energy, tax benefits for some, costly weapons systems, and our two overseas wars. With the stakes this high, it is important that the American people understand the work of the Commission as it puts forward a plan that, if enacted into law, will change each of their lives.

In order to facilitate the openness and transparency needed for the Commission to engage and inform the public, we recommend that as your work proceeds, the Commission:

- Release a clear analysis, as a part of its recommendations, of how any proposed cuts and tax increases will affect various demographic groups, showing how large these potential cuts and tax increases will be as a share of projected income;

- Provide information revealing how investments, made or not made – in job creation, infrastructure, child development, education, support for persons with functional disabilities, alternative energy, etc. – are likely to affect the well-being of today's children as they age, tomorrow's children, and the entire economy generally;

- Consult experts representing a wide range of views, not just on the deficit and fiscal policy, but also with specialized expertise on the particular programs under consideration;

- Hear from representatives of those affected by potential recommendations;

- Permit C-Span coverage and internet streaming of all your meetings and deliberations, including planning meetings, working meetings, drafting sessions, public meetings, and all other sessions where commission work is performed or planned;

- Issue an interim report or a set of draft recommendations before Election Day 2010, so as to allow the Commission's work to be a part of various federal, state, and local campaigns around the country.

We would appreciate the opportunity to work with you to ensure that these necessary transparency measures are in place as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Laura Richardson
Member of Congress

Bob Etheridge
Member of Congress

Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Elijah Cummings
Member of Congress

Bob Filner
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Larry Kissell
Member of Congress

Danny Davis
Member of Congress

Dennis Kucinich
Member of Congress

Betty Sutton
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson-Lee
Member of Congress

Diane Watson
Member of Congress

Pete Stark
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States
The Honorable Max Baucus (D-MT), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable Xavier Becerra (D-CA), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable Dave Camp (R-MI), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable Tom Coburn (R-OK), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable Kent Conrad (D-ND), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable Mike Crapo (R-ID), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable Dick Durbin (D-IL), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable Judd Gregg (R-CT), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable Paul Ryan (R-WI), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
The Honorable John Spratt (D-SC), Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
Andy Stern, Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
Ann Fudge, Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
Dan Cote, Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
Alice Rivlin, Member, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform
Bruce Reed, Executive Director, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform