September 20, 2011

The Honorable John Kerry  
United States Senate  
218 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC  20510-2102

Dear Senator Kerry,

Congratulations on your appointment to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. We appreciate your willingness to serve and to seek bipartisan solutions to our nation's growing deficit. The work of this committee and its recommendations will be of critical importance, and we are reassured that you will be a part of this effort.

In this time of economic uncertainty, the focus must be on improving the climate for long-term growth. There is no doubt that enacting policies to address our nation’s deficit is an important part of this effort, but this cannot come at the expense of key federal investments in research and education that support our nation’s innovation infrastructure. As you well know from our state, higher education and scientific research are key drivers of a vibrant and competitive economy.

As the Committee begins its deliberations, we hope it will consider the broad range of federal budget policies. Continuing reductions in discretionary spending adversely impact two critical national priorities: scientific research and education. These programs are already under significant threat with the caps adopted in the Budget Control Act, and the reductions in FY2011. It is self-defeating to view these investments, as some do, as simply present-day expenditures rather than as essential down payments on our future that will contribute to job creation and increased revenues down the road. Further cuts will result in fewer discoveries in medicine, science, alternative energy, and technology development that are so important to our state’s economy, and reduce access to higher education for thousands of our state’s students.

We know you have a difficult task ahead of you, and thank you for your courage in taking this on. Please know that each of our institutions stands ready to be of assistance to you and the committee as you proceed.

Sincerely,

Susan Hockfield  
President  
MIT

Joseph E. Aoun  
President  
Northeastern University

Anthony P. Monaco  
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