

# HOW SEQUESTERABLE ARE YOU?

## A QUICK GUIDE TO THE SEQUESTRATION, ITS IMPACTS, AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

March 1, 2013 marked the start of the sequestration, a series of mandatory cuts from the federal budget. <sup>1</sup> In April, the sequestration required drastic reductions in airline staff, leading to chaos for travelers. Congress was pressured to quickly redact these cuts, <sup>2</sup> but those remaining will cause even more harm to the daily lives of citizens. <sup>3</sup>

### How did we get to this point? <sup>4</sup>

**August 2011** Budget Control Act passed.

- Congress agreed to raise the debt ceiling in exchange for \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts, to be determined by a bipartisan committee
- If the committee failed to reach a deal, an automatic set of \$1.2 trillion in spending cuts would go into place, termed the sequestration

A year and a half passed while Congress is repeatedly unsuccessful in coming to a spending agreement

**January 2013** American Taxpayer Relief Act passed.

- In order to avoid the fiscal cliff and probable resulting recession, this act delayed the start of the sequestration until March 2013

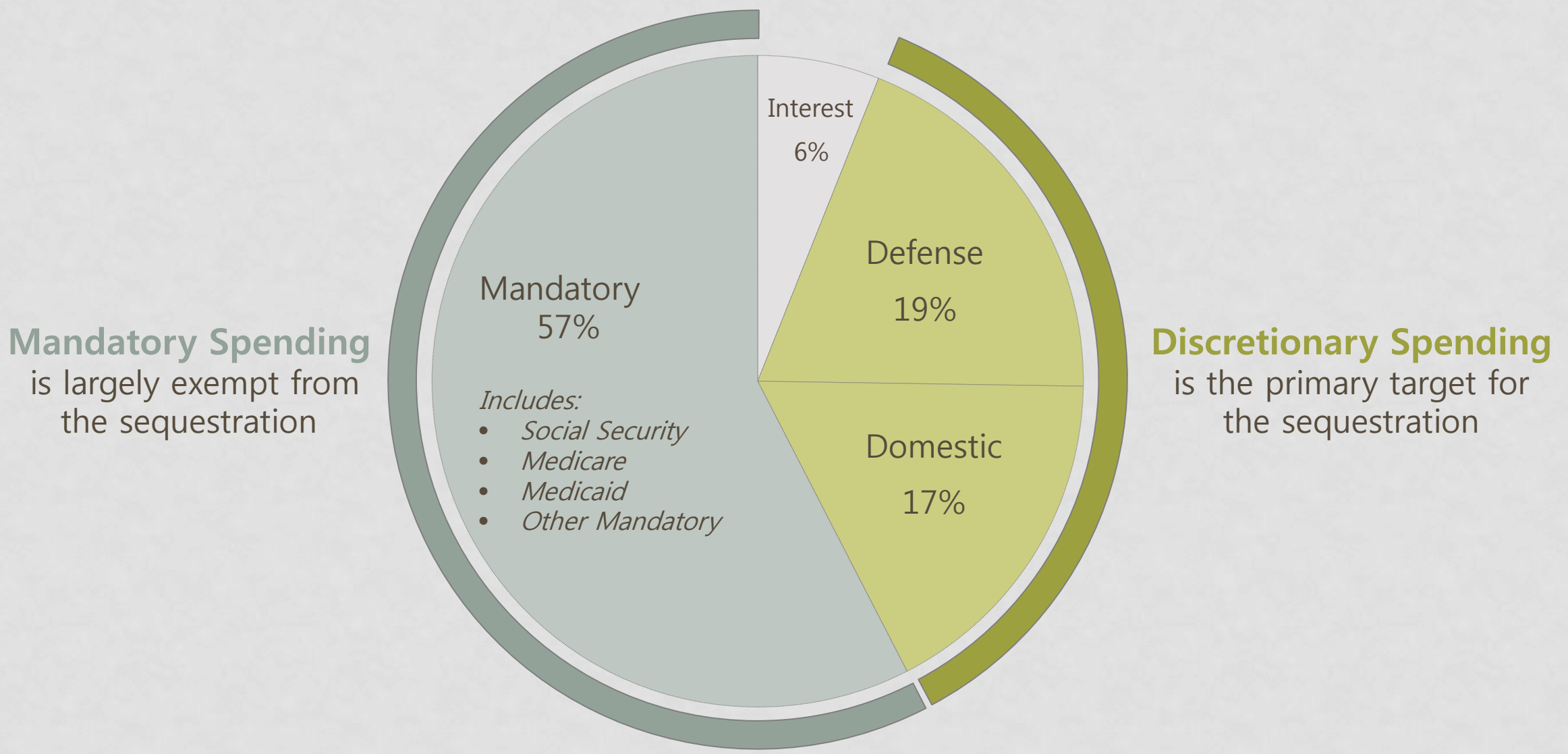
**March 2013** Sequestration began.

- Congress failed to reach a spending reduction deal, and the sequestration went into effect

While Americans disagree about which cuts (if any) should occur at this time, <sup>5</sup> the sequestration was originally designed to be a *penalty* if Congress failed to enact a budget plan, due to the unfocused nature of the sequestration cuts. <sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the American people are now the ones impacted by the consequences of Congressional inaction.

### What is being cut from the budget?

The chart below illustrates the distribution of federal spending in fiscal year 2012. <sup>7</sup>



In the final seven months of Fiscal Year 2013, \$85.3 billion will be cut from the budget: <sup>8</sup>

Budget Category	Reduction	Examples
Domestic	\$28.7B (5.3% reduction)	Children eliminated from Head Start Students' work-study job opportunities reduced Risk of homelessness increased Seniors' meals reduced from Meals on Wheels
Defense	\$42.7B (7.9% reduction)	Civilian Department of Defense employees furloughed
Medicare	\$9.9B (2.0% reduction)	Cancer patients turned away from clinics
Other Mandatory	\$4.0B (5.8% reduction)	Long-Term unemployment benefits reduced

The cuts do not end after 2013, however. The budget will continue to be reduced over the next 8 years, until **\$1.2 trillion** in spending cuts is achieved. <sup>9</sup>

### Who is affected by these cuts?

Approximately 40% of Americans stated that they have already felt the effects of the sequestration. <sup>10</sup> Below, you'll find just a few examples of the impacts that specific groups of individuals have had to endure.

Nationally, **\$120** will be eliminated each month from citizens' long-term unemployment benefits, <sup>11</sup> equivalent to a week's groceries for a family of two. <sup>12</sup>

June

= 1 day of food = 1 day of no food

Nationally, **125,000 families** will be at risk for becoming homeless this year. <sup>13</sup>

= 1000 families

In **Indiana**, **1,000 children** will be eliminated from Head Start this year. <sup>14</sup>

= 10 children

In **Illinois**, **2,650 students** will no longer have access to work-study jobs this year. <sup>15</sup>

= 50 students

In **Long Island, New York**, **over 5,300 cancer patients** will be rejected from a group of cancer clinics. <sup>16</sup>

= 100 patients = 100 rejected patients

In **Wake County, North Carolina**, **12,000 meals for seniors** will be eliminated from the Meals on Wheels program. <sup>17</sup>

= 100 meals

In **Texas**, **52,000 civilian employees** will be furloughed in the Department of Defense, reducing annual pay by \$5,000 on average. <sup>18</sup>

= 1000 employees

### What can I do to help?

**Contact Congress!**

Find your representative [here](#)  
Can't find the right words? Use this email template:  
*Dear Honorable Elected Official, My name is \_\_\_ and I am a resident of \_\_\_. I would like to request your support in redacting the sequestration. These budget cuts jeopardize the programs essential for the health and welfare of many citizens in the most impoverished areas of our communities, whom we have a responsibility to protect. In a fragile economy, we cannot make irresponsible, unfocused budget cuts. As citizens, we trust our elected representatives to act within the best interests of the public; however, these sequester cuts jeopardize our citizens' well-being. Thank you for your consideration.*

**Sign a Petition!**

Here are a few options:  
[Fix the Sequester Cuts](#)  
[Reverse the Sequestration](#)  
[End Sequestration](#)

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**Sources:**  
 1. [The White House](#), February 2013  
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