Dear Speaker Pelosi, Chairwoman Lowey, and Chairman McGovern:

We are writing to you to express our deep concerns about the decision to remove spending reduction accounts from the appropriations process. It was dismaying to learn that these accounts were nowhere to be found in the appropriations bills, packaged together as minibuses. These accounts served the important purpose of allowing Members of Congress to propose amendments that reduce the federal government’s level of spending in order to lessen our national debt and deficit. We urge you to remedy this in the remaining appropriations bills, or in a Conference Committee with our Senate counterparts.

It is our Constitutional duty to appropriate federal funds, and we believe it is necessary to do so in a fiscally responsible manner. Through the amendment process, Members of Congress, many of whom do not sit on the Appropriations Committee, should be given the opportunity to direct allocated funds towards deficit reduction, instead of continuing to increase funding for federal programs. Currently, our debt surpasses $22 trillion and our annual deficit is approaching $1 trillion, with the Congressional Budget Office projecting that over the next 10 years, net interest costs on our debt will total nearly $7 trillion. In light of these staggering amounts, we should be taking any steps possible to reduce both our debt and deficit. Instead, you have chosen to deny Members the opportunity to voice their concerns throughout this process.

A conversation about the federal government’s excessive spending habits needs to be had, and at a minimum the levels of discretionary spending should certainly be debated. Without the presence of spending reductions accounts, there is no meaningful way for Members to offer amendments that bring our spending levels closer to the amount that this body collects from taxpayers.

It is a sad day for this legislative body. To intentionally eliminate spending reduction accounts is just an illustration to the American people of your unwillingness to seriously address our nation’s increasingly dire fiscal outlook. This restriction on Members’ abilities to participate in the appropriations process is unnecessary and irresponsible. While the goal should be a balanced budget, today we are simply asking for the opportunity to debate, vote, and make meaningful changes to the appropriations legislation. We hope that you will hear our concerns and that spending reduction accounts will be present in the remaining pieces of appropriation legislation.

Sincerely,