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Reformed Church in America
Religious Society of Friends
Roman Catholic Church
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Church
Unity Fellowship Church
Movement
Eight Congregations

November 3, 2011

Dear Members of the NC Congressional Delegation,

As religious leaders in North Carolina representing many denominations and faith traditions in our great state, **we urge you to use all of the opportunities you have for input with the nation's supercommittee to prevent requiring further sacrifices from poor and vulnerable people in our state and nation.** In Proverbs 31:8-9, we are reminded to *“Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.”*

With 14 million people unemployed (450,000 North Carolinians) and poverty rates rising in our state and nation (Feeding America reports that 18.2% of North Carolina's people are food insecure), we must prioritize creating jobs and assisting those most in need.

As leaders in North Carolina's faith community, we call for the protection of Medicaid and all food assistance programs such as SNAP and WIC as well as tax incentives and programs for low-income people (EITC, unemployment insurance, etc) that generate economic growth. The Interreligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs reports that:

Every \$1 of SNAP benefits generates \$1.73-\$1.79 in economic growth.

Every \$1 in refundable tax credits, like the EITC and child tax credit, generates \$1.26 in economic growth.

Every \$1 dollar of unemployment insurance benefits generates an estimated \$1.63 in economic growth.

We encourage the use of revenue producing options and reductions in wasteful defense spending as ways to reduce our deficit. The burden of deficit reduction should not be borne by programs for poor and vulnerable people who are now struggling and are not in a position to sacrifice more. We acknowledge the challenges the supercommittee faces as they develop a plan by Thanksgiving that will reduce our deficits by \$1.5 trillion. However, as you make recommendations and communicate with members of the supercommittee, we strongly urge you to protect assistance for poor and vulnerable populations.

Our budget is a moral document; may it reflect the common good and priorities that help people in need in North Carolina and our nation.

Sincerely,

The Rev. J. George Reed, Executive Director of North Carolina Council of Churches
The Rev. Collins Kilburn, Executive Director Emeritus, North Carolina Council of Churches
Stan C. Kimer, President, NC Council of Churches

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Denominational Leaders

The Rev. Dr. James E. Aydelotte, Moderator, Presbytery of Western North Carolina, PC(USA)
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The Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina
The Rev. Al Gwinn, Bishop, North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church
The Rev. David Guthrie, President, Provincial Elder's Conference, Moravian Church in America, Southern Province
The Rev. Sam Marshall, General Presbyter, Salem Presbytery, PC(USA)
Bishop Tonyia M. Rawls, Southern Jurisdictional Prelate of the Unity Fellowship Church Movement
and Pastor, Unity Fellowship Church, Charlotte
The Rev. John M. Richardson, Regional Minister, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
The Rev. Dr. Samuel E. Roberson, General Presbyter/Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Charlotte, PC(USA)
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Clergy and Lay Leaders

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Suzanne Gloor, Episcopalian, Asheville
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Bettie Haley, Episcopalian, Durham

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The Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, Episcopalian, Durham
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The Rev. Harrel Johnson, Holy Innocents Episcopal, Henderson
Deacon Katherine Johnson, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Hillsborough
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Calvin King, Mennonite Fellowship, Asheville
Cyrus King, Community United Church of Christ, Raleigh
The Rev. Nathan King, Senior Pastor, Trinity United Church of Christ, Concord
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Debra Nickels, Cary
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The Rev. Rush Otey, Selwyn Avenue Presbyterian Church, Charlotte
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The Rev. James Prevatt, Episcopalian, Greensboro
Joy Christi Przeworski, Worship Associate/Candidate for UU Ministry, Unitarian Universalist Church of Asheville
The Rev. Bruce Puckett, Pastor, The Congregation at Duke Chapel
The Rev. Paula Rachal, Episcopalian, Greensboro
Virginia Ramig, Worship Associate, Unitarian Universalist Church of Asheville
The Rev. Mark Ramsey, Pastor, Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Asheville
Dr. Barbara Reynolds, Asheville Friends Meeting, Society of Friends (Quakers)
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Kitty Katherine Richards, SGI-USA Buddhist, Black Mountain
The Rev. Dr. Sarah Rieth, Episcopalian, Charlotte
The Rev. John D. Rights, Moravian Church, Winston-Salem
Cyndy and Ron Rios, St. James Episcopal Church, Black Mountain
The Rev. DiAnna Ritola, Interfaith Minister, Asheville
The Rev. Dr. Jean Rodenbough, Past President, NC Council of Churches, Salem Presbytery, PCUSA, Greensboro
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The Rev. Harry Woggon (retired), St. Mary's Episcopal, Asheville
The Rev. Stephanie Workman, Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian, Cary
Barbara Volk, Past President, North Carolina Council of Churches, Raleigh