

## **DSA National Political Committee Statement on the Super-Committee Impasse and the Need to Deepen the Fight Against Reactionary Budget Cuts**

**November 29, 2011**

Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has long held that Democratic legislators will shape up and take action on behalf of ordinary people when, and only when, people are out in the streets demanding they do so. Well, people have been out in the streets, and the Congressional Super-Committee deadlocked, which presumably means that the six Democrats on it refused to consider cuts in domestic social programs not balanced by tax increases on the rich. Of course they could not prevail to push through a better program than the automatic cuts put in place last summer.

DSA recognizes that without the militant and persistent efforts of Occupy Wall Street to prioritize the issues of economic inequality, jobs, and financial regulation over reactionary cuts to entitlements and anti-poverty programs, moderate Democrats might have succumbed to the counter-productive belief that we can cut our way out of the Great Recession. The Occupy movement, combined with the efforts of the labor movement to fight reactionary attacks on the rights of working people, has changed public discourse about our nation's past and future. Now it is time to redouble our efforts and force politicians to change public policy in a democratic and egalitarian direction. The referendum defeat of the reactionary anti-labor SB5 bill in Ohio shows that the conservative tide can and must be reversed. DSAers have been active throughout the country in both Occupy and the labor movement and we will redouble our efforts to help Occupy survive the winter and to keep fighting against both national and state and local budget cuts that negatively affect vital human services.

DSAers through our participation in #OWS and by our own efforts pressured Super-Committee members and other members of Congress to oppose disastrous budget cuts. We urge our members and friends who are constituents of a Democratic Super-Committee member to send them holiday greetings with thanks for standing fast on the need for tax increases on the rich, but also to remind them that Congress must also refuse to cut entitlement programs and vital social service and anti-poverty programs.

Progressives should also turn our attention to the emerging battle around the automatic cuts. We must insist that military cuts are justified, but the domestic ones are not. We need to speak up for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and every federal anti-poverty program. Fortunately, none of the cuts will actually take effect until 2013, so there is time to elect a new Congress that would reverse the domestic cuts, but preserve (and extend) the military ones.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, progressives need to focus like a laser-beam on the call for a real jobs program, financed from taxes on those who can afford them. We must push for higher income tax rates on the highest earners and for higher

effective corporate tax rates, as well as for a financial transactions tax. Putting America back to work is the simplest way to reduce dependence on safety net programs and to increase federal and state revenues. After all, only when people have incomes can they pay income taxes.

We in DSA know that if we restored effective personal and corporate tax rates to those of the pre-Reagan era and cut the defense budget, we could easily afford not only existing entitlement programs but also truly universal health care and child care. Run-away health care costs are a problem that can only be fixed by a single-payer national health insurance program and a federal government willing to use its clout when it pays for prescription drugs.

In sum the progressive movement can take credit for winning a battle, but we have yet to win the war against a Republican and moderate Democratic consensus that the long-term budget deficit should be addressed by devastating cuts in human services. Progressives know -- and must inform their fellow citizens -- that the long-term federal budget shortfall was created by combining a revenue shortage due to regressive tax cuts for the rich and tax breaks for corporations with decades of excessive spending on unnecessary wars and unneeded weapons systems. The fight to reverse these policies continues.