



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

July 23, 2013

The Honorable Darrell Issa
Chair, House Oversight and Government
Reform Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Ranking Member, House Oversight and
Government Reform Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Terie T. Norelli
Speaker
New Hampshire House
President, NCSL

Patsy Spaw
Secretary of the Texas Senate
Staff Chair, NCSL

William Pound
Executive Director

RE: H.R. 899

Dear Chairman Issa and Ranking Member Cummings:

On behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), we write in support of provisions in the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act of 2013 (H.R. 899) that strengthen the analysis and oversight of federal intergovernmental mandates on state and local governments.

NCSL remains an adamant supporter of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA), which was adopted "...to curb the practice of imposing unfunded federal mandates on state and local governments." However, NCSL believes UMRA needs to be strengthened in order to improve federal accountability, enhance consultation and place the fiscal effects of federal legislation on state and local governments under a sharper microscope.

Provisions contained in H.R. 899 correct some of UMRA's shortcomings by expanding the scope of reporting requirements to include new conditions of grant aid. NCSL's members repeatedly point to this exclusion as one of UMRA's major flaws. NCSL is also pleased that H.R. 899 would require identification of reasonably foreseeable indirect costs, expand UMRA's reporting requirements to independent regulatory agencies and allow for congressional requests for regulatory "look-back" analyses of existing federal mandates.

Federal efforts to reduce the nation's debt has already seen reductions in discretionary funding for state-federal programs. States will struggle if federal policymakers choose to export the deficit to states and localities. H.R. 899 is a vital piece to ensure the federal government does not put an unreasonably burden on state governments through additional unfunded mandates and cost shifts. For more information, please contact Sheri Steisel (202-624-8693; sheri.steisel@ncsl.org) or Jeff Hurley (202-624-7753; jeff.hurley@ncsl.org).

Respectfully,

Senator Toi Hutchinson
Illinois General Assembly
Co-Chair, Budgets and Revenue Committee

Senator Ellen Roberts
Colorado General Assembly
Co-Chair, Budgets and Revenue Committee

Cc: Members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee

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