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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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Chairman Charles Boustany  
Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
1101 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member John Lewis  
Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
1101 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Boustany and Ranking Member Lewis,

In light of the Subcommittee's hearing on government operations at the statutory debt limit, I write to bring to the attention of the Subcommittee the need to protect critical federal law enforcement in the event the debt ceiling is reached. I respectfully request that this letter be made part of the hearing record.

The Strengthening Homeland Security, Intelligence, and Essential Law Enforcement Departments (SHIELD) Act of 2013, bipartisan legislation I introduced on the first day of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, rightly recognizes the need to prioritize critical federal law enforcement. The SHIELD Act will ensure compensation for our Armed Service members and critical federal law enforcement personnel in the event the debt ceiling is reached.

Legislation has been introduced to protect the pay of our Armed Services personnel and to prioritize other government obligations. And I fully support those efforts. However, the SHIELD Act would include the critical law enforcement agents that Americans depend on to protect the homeland and respond to threats. In the event the debt ceiling is reached, many federal officers will be furloughed and forced to stay home. We could have a perilous lapse in law enforcement and homeland security protection. The operations of terrorists and violent criminals will not take pause if and when the debt ceiling is reached, and neither should the vital law enforcement operations we rely on to counter the threat they pose to public safety and homeland security. By ensuring funding for critical federal officers, we are eliminating the prospect of agencies placing federal officers on furlough and sustaining a law enforcement presence at a critical time.

Law enforcement deemed critical by the SHIELD Act is defined as:

1. Those who have statutory authority to make arrests or apprehensions;
2. Who are authorized by the agency of the employee to carry firearms; and

3. Whose duties include performing emergency work involving the safety of human life or the protection of property

In our most difficult hours, we rely on members of our federal law enforcement community and our Armed Services for the protection of our liberty and freedom. No service member or critical law enforcement officer protecting the United States at home or abroad should have to worry about their paycheck in the event the debt ceiling is reached. The SHIELD Act pledges to protect those who protect us, even in times of financial uncertainty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Fitzpatrick". The signature is stylized and fluid, with the first name "Mike" written in a cursive-like script and the last name "Fitzpatrick" written in a more formal, slightly cursive style.

Michael G. Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress