



March 18, 2013

Dear Senator,

ASAE and the attached list of associations respectfully urge you to support the ability of federal employees to attend private sector educational meetings and events, especially those that are related to their agency. In particular, we ask you to reject Senate Amendment 67 to the Continuing Resolution, HR 933, which would arbitrarily restrict the number of government employees who can attend any meeting or conference to 25.

The American Society of Association Executives (“ASAE”) is a section 501(c)(6) individual membership organization of more than 22,000 association executives and industry partners representing nearly 12,000 tax-exempt organizations. Its members manage leading trade associations, professional societies, and voluntary organizations across the United States and in 50 countries around the globe. We advocate for associations so that they may continue to fulfill their important missions and improve the quality of life in the United States and abroad.

ASAE and the association community fully support the intent of Congress to induce greater transparency and accountability in government spending. There is no defense for exorbitant or wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars. However, while the amendment is intended to limit spending on government-sponsored conferences and travel expenses for federal employees, the net result would be fewer opportunities to learn and exchange information with the private sector.

The dialogue that takes place at these meetings between government and the private sector is essential to the development of informed policymaking that facilitates economic growth and job creation. The dangers of government operating in a vacuum are too great to ignore.

However well-intentioned, the amendment has broad implications for associations and other non-governmental organizations that invite government employees to give presentations or attend their conferences. The amendment would severely diminish government attendance at educational conferences and hinder the necessary interchange between government and the private sector.

For these reasons, we urge you to support the ability of federal employees to attend private sector educational meetings and events, especially those that are impacted by their agency. In particular, we ask you to reject Senate Amendment 67 to the Continuing Resolution, HR 933.

Sincerely,