



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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General Gordon R. Sullivan
United States Army (Ret.)
President

15 March 2013

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the members of the Association of the United States Army, I write to urge you to oppose the Coburn Amendment #67 to HR 933 that would limit attendance by federal agency personnel at any domestic meeting or conference to no more than 25.

The dialogue that occurs at conferences between the federal government and the private sector is invaluable to an informed policymaking process. Public-private collaboration works best when there is face-to-face exchange of knowledge and ideas. Setting an arbitrary limit without consideration of the size of the federal agency affected is unwise. While 25 people might be appropriate for a very small federal agency, for very large agencies like the Department of Defense, a limit of 25 is inappropriate.

Furthermore, conferences and symposia often provide professional development, credentialing and licensure opportunities that in many cases are not available within the federal government.

AUSA fully supports congressional efforts to increase transparency and accountability in government spending. However, the legislation in question, while designed to limit spending on government-sponsored conferences and travel expenses, would actually have a chilling effect on government employees' participation in non-governmental meetings and conferences.

AUSA urges you to strongly oppose the Coburn Amendment #67 to HR 933.

Sincerely,

GORDON R. SULLIVAN
General, USA Retired