



IFE INFO hosts Senator Jon Kyl (AZ), Republican Whip

On June 11, 2012, the Institute for Education was delighted to host another exciting meeting of the INFO Public Policy Roundtable series, featuring U.S. Senator Jon Kyl, Republican Whip (AZ). Senator Kyl shared insights of his diverse and accomplished political career in the U.S. Congress, and is now serving his third and final term in the U.S. Senate after previously serving for eight years in the U.S. House of Representatives. IFE CEO and Founder, Coach Kathy Kemper, and Former Director of National Intelligence General Michael Hayden introduced Senator Kyl, who Hayden called “the great persuader of the United States Congress.”



Addressing the attendees, which included Ambassadors from Switzerland, Norway, Japan, Luxembourg, Portugal, Indonesia, Philippines, Egypt, and Finland, Senator Kyl highlighted one of the biggest challenges facing the future of American defense: budget sequestration that could be triggered in the coming months. Senator Kyl noted that, at the end of this year, unless Congress acts promptly, the U.S. defense community – as well as non-defense sectors – will suffer across-the-board cuts, as part of the broader budgetary sequestration called for by last year’s budget compromise. In all, these cuts — if not averted — would constitute around \$110 billion each year for the next 10 years. Kyl argued that these budget cuts would have catastrophic impacts on the future of American defense.



The Senator went on to describe how defense sequestration would not only have an impact on the US national security by taking resources from the American troops, but could also negatively impact the overall U.S. economy. Senator Kyl quoted a study that estimated that sequestration, in full effect, could imperil as many as one million U.S. jobs directly or indirectly dependent on the sector. Particularly troublesome, he said, would be the U.S. government’s inability to follow through on existing contracts, since “you can’t build three-quarters of an aircraft carrier.” He clarified, however, that his party’s opposition to defense sequestration is principally a matter of national security, rather than the “Keynesian notion” that defense spending can be a form of stimulus. Later in his remarks, Senator Kyl noted that considerable savings could indeed be found in the defense sector and elsewhere — but in a smarter way. One Republican suggestion would be to stem the influx and replacement of federal employees, gradually reducing their number by enacting a two-third replacement rate on hires as existing employees retire. Senator Kyl concluded by arguing that the choice between tax increases and defense sequestration proposed by some is a false dichotomy and there are alternative solutions waiting to be explored. Defense sequestration is entirely preventable and it could lead to disastrous consequences for the future of American national security.

By Joanne Ke, IFE Fellow

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