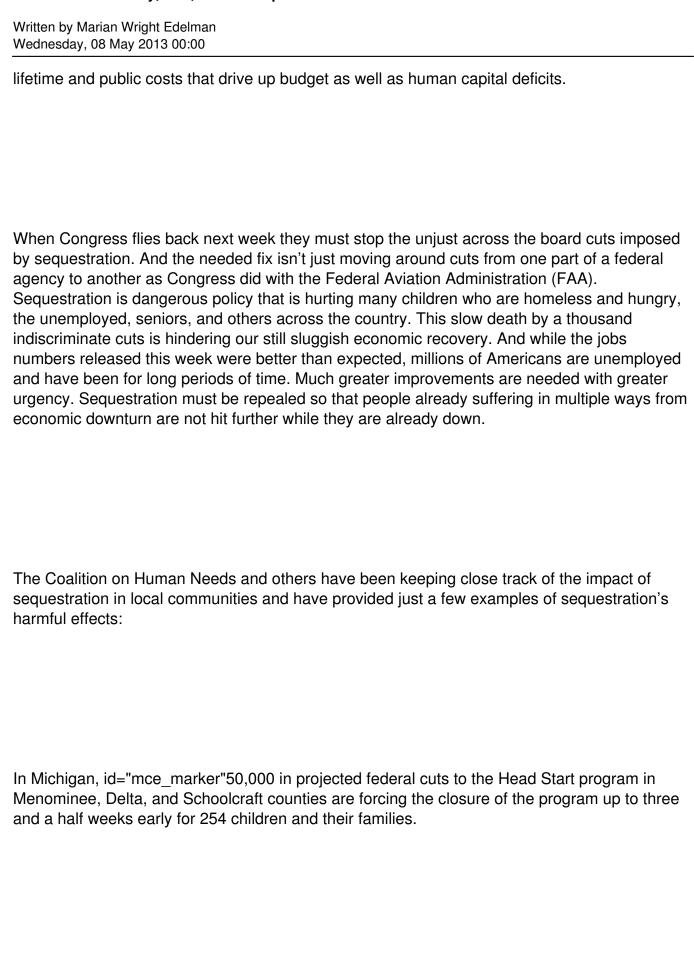
Written by Marian Wright Edelman Wednesday, 08 May 2013 00:00



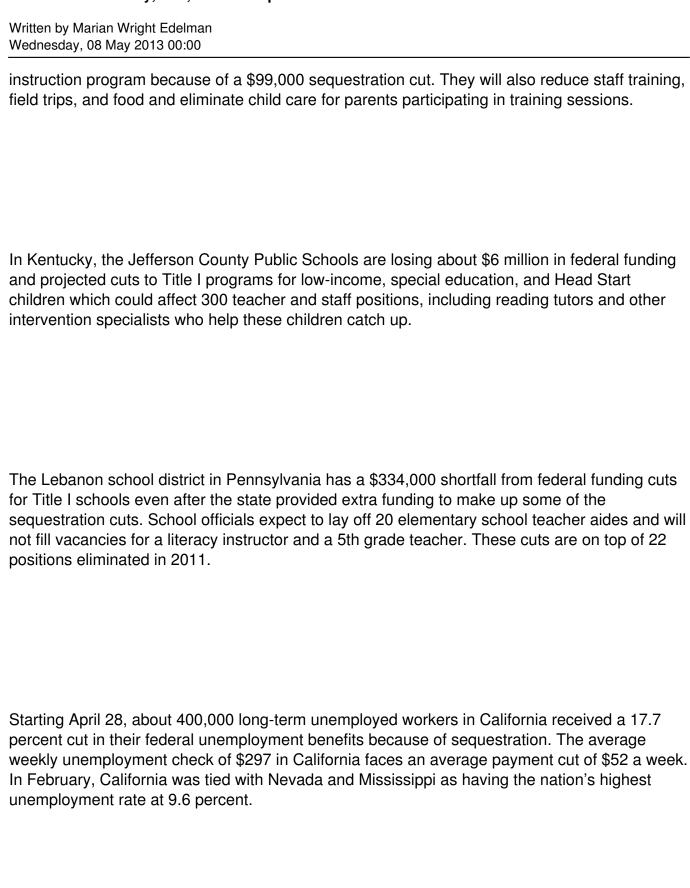
Anyone despairing that Congress can't get anything done should note last week's swift vote to get furloughed air traffic controllers back to work. Congress can move very quickly and efficiently when it wants to and when its own comfort and that of constituents well-off enough to fly was affected.

Reduced unemployment benefits, children dropped suddenly from Head Start programs, poor mothers and babies losing food supplements, teacher layoffs, and cancelled meal deliveries for seniors didn't move them—but airport delays as members headed out of town for their April recess were apparently unacceptable.

Poor 3- and 4-year-olds denied the early child development services that can help them succeed in life may not be able to call Congress, but we need to speak out for them to stop those cuts too. We know that eliminating a child's early education investments now will increase his chance of going to prison later by 39 percent. And paying for that prison will cost all of us nearly three times more a year than it would have cost to provide him a quality early learning foundation to get ready for school. So I hope parents and grandparents and all of us will tell our members of Congress to "be careful what you cut" because some cuts create scars that last a

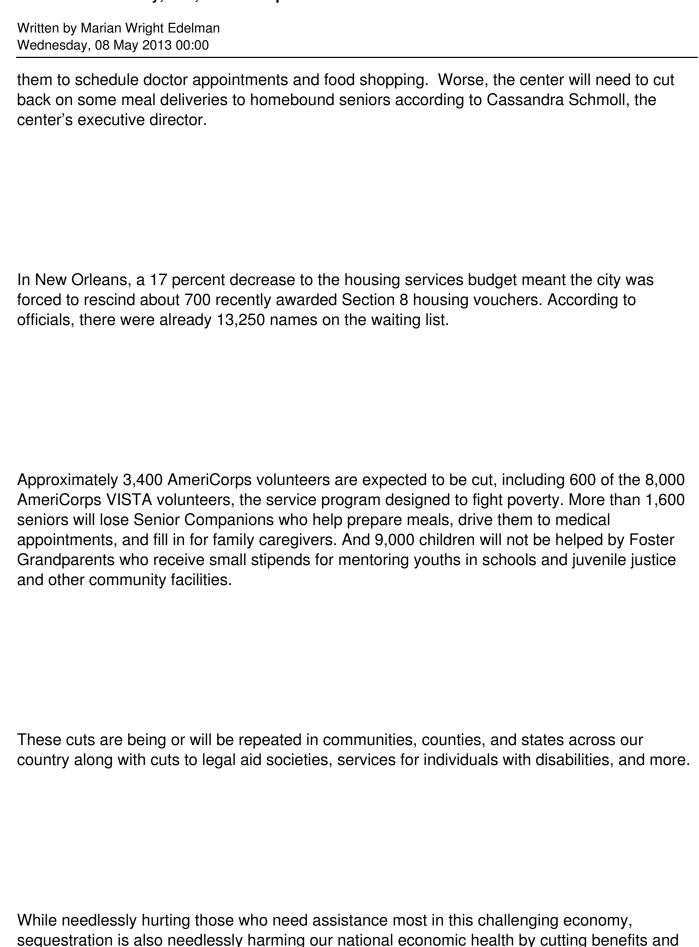


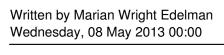
College Station, Texas's Head Start and Early Head Start will eliminate a 20-day summer



Faced with a nine percent sequestration cut, the Henry County Senior Center in western Illinois has shortened its transportation services for seniors by two hours per day, making it harder for

jobs and causing furloughs.





The Congressional Budget Office, the nonpartisan arbiter of budgetary impacts, estimated in February that sequestration will reduce gross domestic product growth in 2013 by 30 percent compared to what would have happened without the indiscriminate cuts. This is expected to cost the nation 750,000 jobs.

While today's jobs numbers help assuage fears of a sharp economic slowdown, the fact is that with 11.7 million Americans unemployed in April of 2013 and an unemployment rate of 7.5 percent—the 52nd consecutive month of unemployment at or above 7.5 percent—any policy that cuts jobs is a policy we cannot afford.

Our Congressional leaders need to make better choices but enough citizens must demand they do so. Don't we want to remove more people from the unemployment rolls? Don't we want to prevent more children from falling deeper into poverty and further behind? Instead of indiscriminate cuts under the guise of deficit reduction, we need a comprehensive strategy that includes a mix of investing in job creation and early childhood development and learning supports; tax increases for the wealthiest; and spending cuts to non-vulnerable groups to help strengthen the economy and meet the needs of children today and prepare for tomorrow's workforce and military and future economic growth.

Tomorrow is today, so contact your Representative and Senators and urge them to repeal sequestration, get about the real business of strengthening our economy, and to be careful what they cut.

Written by Marian Wright Edelman Wednesday, 08 May 2013 00:00

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information go to www.childrensdefense.org.