Contacting your elected representatives is easier than you might think. You can call and talk to a staffer or fill out a contact form using their website. You can find your Representative’s contact info here. You can find your Senators’ contact info here.

Here’s an example to get you started:

Subject: Support US Innovation and Stop Sequestration

Dear <Insert Name here>:

I am writing as a constituent in your district to highlight MIT President Reif’s and Craig Barrett’s recent op/ed in the Financial Times arguing against sequestration.

Sequester cuts on track to be triggered this Friday, March 1, will cause irreparable damage to the future of our country. The first impact will be in the area of federal funding for research and, as this funding continues to falter over the 9-year timeline of sequester, these cuts will reverberate through the economy in the form of lowered competitiveness, loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs, and curtailed innovation across economic sectors.

There is no doubt that while the federal budget is a significant concern, the current laser focus on reducing the federal deficit at all costs ignores the more complex needs of a dynamic economy, including the necessity to ensure a strong growth rate. In 2010, the U.S. Commerce Department reported over 60% of U.S. economic growth since World War II has been tied to technological and related innovation. Without investment in R&D, our economy doesn’t have the engines for innovation that drive growth.

In addition to stalling the country’s economic growth engine, these additional cuts to R&D come on the heels of 30 years of underinvestment in R&D. According to the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, from 1987 to 2007 investment in federally funded research as a portion of GDP grew just 0.3 percent annually. This figure significantly trails the investment of other countries in R&D, including China.

As an alumnus of MIT, I want to emphasize to you the mistake it is to not only continue the trajectory of underinvestment in R&D but to cut it even further. As you have already seen from the new numbers out this week, and as compiled by The Science Coalition, sequestration will reduce federal funding for scientific research by nearly $85 billion over the next nine years. This will reduce GDP by at least $203 billion. Between 2013 and 2016 alone, the economy will forfeit 200,000 jobs.
We know that sequestration will have a disastrous effect on the economy. The time is now: bet on America and American competitiveness, end the sequester threat, and recommit to funding American innovation for economic growth.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[City, State ZIP]

Here’s a Potential Letter to the Editor of your Local Newspaper:

Dear Editor:

Today I am writing to urge the registered voters in our community to take a stand and contact their congressperson to end the sequester cuts to be triggered this Friday, March 1, which will cause irreparable damage to the future of our country.

The first impact will be in the area of federal funding for research and, as this funding continues to falter over the 9-year timeline of sequester, these cuts will reverberate through the economy in the form of lowered competitiveness, loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs, and curtailed innovation across economic sectors.

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I think we can all agree that sequestration will have a disastrous effect on the economy. I ask all citizens in our community to take action and ensure that our legislators understand the enormous importance of bipartisan action on this issue.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[City, State ZIP]