

"The looming vote to raise the debt ceiling, therefore, is our last opportunity to rein in our debt and deficits and fundamentally change the way the federal government spends Americans tax dollars."

For fiscal year 2007, the last year for which the Republican majority was responsible for the budget, Republicans were properly berated by Democrats for being so irresponsible as to run up a \$160 billion deficit. After President Obama took office, those very same beraters found it perfectly acceptable to spend upwards of \$1 trillion more than we took in. Last year, in fact, they ran up a breathtaking \$1.5 trillion deficit in just one year.

On the other hand, House Republicans in the Pledge to America last fall said, if given the majority, we would save at least \$100 billion in the first year alone. Nonetheless, after taking over the majority in the House, the Republicans began crying time out, we do not have a full year to make \$100 billion in cuts, it must be prorated for only the remaining months of the year. That meant that the \$100 billion in cuts for the year would only be \$61 billion. Incredibly, a majority of the press and the American people were willing to give us a pass. They accepted \$61 billion in cuts as satisfying that part of our pledge. Unfortunately, Republican leaders ultimately said that \$39 billion was all that could be secured. According to the Congressional Budget Office, we are told that the amount of actual cuts was only \$352 million.

Having fallen short of the pledge, some leaders now claim that the best opportunities to save trillions are yet to come through passage of Rep. Ryan's "Pathway to Prosperity" budget. Yet many Americans are left to wonder, "If they can't keep their word on billions of dollars in cuts, how can we trust their word to make trillions of dollars in cuts?" Some of us also think 26 years is still too long to balance our budget.

The budget we passed two weeks ago is a goal, an aspiration. It's a pledge. The budget does not appropriate funding, it says, "Here is what we hope to do." Actual spending decisions are made through the appropriations process. There may be 12 or 13 or so appropriations bills this year, depending on whether or not some get combined with others. The details in each of these bills actually define where financial reform occurs.

As each bill comes to the floor for consideration, dutiful Republicans will battle to the last to get the cuts through. The debates will be long and brutal. After a great deal of blood, sweat, and

tears, the bills will pass the House, then move on to the Senate, where Majority Leader Harry Reid, refusing to take them up, will simply deposit them in his desk drawer, and they will never be seen again. Reid will likely wait out House Republicans. On or about Sept. 30, 2011, the end of the federal fiscal year, Reid will probably load up a monster omnibus spending bill with all of the Democrats' big-ticket items, send it across the Capitol to the Republican House, and force approval of it.

Reid has been empowered to do this because Republicans surrendered a fundamental negotiating posture during the recent Continuing Resolution debate by refusing to allow the government to be shut down. At the end of this fiscal year, we will find ourselves right back in the government shutdown fight—a fight we have already conceded.

But that doesn't have to be the outcome.

The most effective spending-cut leverage Republicans can have is majority support from the American people in the upcoming vote over raising the debt ceiling. We cannot continue to spend \$3.75 trillion a year when we only take in \$2.1 trillion. If we help Americans to understand this, they will help us end the Democratic leaders' out-of-control spending.

With the will of the American people behind us, and Republican leaders understanding this, they should surely be able to stand firmly enough to secure significant concessions from President Obama and Sen. Reid. Rather than relying on the Democrat White House and Senate to cooperate with us while we work to realize the goals of a Republican budget through the appropriations process, we must mobilize the American people behind the effort to use the leverage of the upcoming debt-ceiling vote to enact concrete fiscal reforms, real budget cuts, or end the funding for ObamaCare.

Cutting spending is the only way America will survive this fiscal crisis. However, as noted above, neither the Ryan budget nor the upcoming appropriations process will give us the leverage necessary to do so. The looming vote to raise the debt ceiling, therefore, is our last opportunity to rein in our debt and deficits and fundamentally change the way the federal government spends Americans tax dollars. Americans will not blame us if we try and fail, but we break faith with them if we fail to try.

Congressman Louie Gohmert (R.) represents the 1st district of Texas.

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Read the op-ed online [here](#) .

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