

This Week in Washington



WITH CONGRESSMAN
JO BONNER

Attacks on House-Passed Budget Don't Hold Up

It's been five months since the House of Representatives passed the "Path to Prosperity" budget – our second budget in two years to tackle chronic federal overspending and trillion dollar annual budget deficits. In recent days the House-passed budget and its author, Congressman Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, have come under a hailstorm of attacks for their supposed extreme approach. These attacks don't hold up in the light of day.

The budget blueprint adopted by the House last March charts a responsible course toward an eventual balanced budget by the year 2040. House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan went out of his way to avoid partisan conflict during the drafting of the budget. He studied and diagnosed the federal government's terminal case of overspending with the precision of a physician, recommending a careful balance of treatments to restore our fiscal health without drastic disruption of services.

For starters, the House budget plan would reduce government spending from its current level of 24 percent of the economy to 20 percent by 2015, hardly draconian cuts. It also allows for much smaller increases in federal spending in later years but places overall spending targets far below President Obama's

bloated and irresponsible spending plans. The House budget would also block the president's \$1.9 trillion tax increase and reduce federal budget deficits by over \$3 trillion compared to President Obama's plan. Equally important, it makes recommendations to reform the broken tax code to make it more simple and fair, without special interest loopholes.

Chairman Ryan also studied the long-term solvency of Medicare and reached across the aisle – and across the Capitol – in consultation on how to save the program. Working with Democrat Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon, he developed a plan that would allow future seniors to choose from either traditional Medicare coverage – as they have been accustomed – or coverage from a private company. The government would help offset the costs of seniors' choice of plans. This approach was tailored to preserve seniors' access to care rather than simply ignoring the impending insolvency of Medicare as this administration and the Senate majority have chosen to do.

There is no assault on seniors or any attempt to undermine Medicare, as many from the left are asserting in the media. Ironically, it is President Obama who has gone on the assault by supporting \$700 billion in cuts to Medicare and by empowering an unaccountable so-called Independent Payment Advisory Board to make decisions on payment rates for many Medicare providers.

This country is in a serious financial mess and only House Republicans have offered a budget blueprint that responsibly walks us back from the edge of the cliff. It is absolutely the worst example of cynicism to hear many on the left attacking the House budget when they themselves have offered no realistic budget alternative. August 11, 2012, marked 1,200 days since the Senate adopted a budget of their own, as required by law.

As the House Budget Chairman recently put it, "Never before has our nation needed a budget and a long-term financial plan as badly as

it needs one now. The Congressional Budget Office stated this week that the federal government is on track to run another trillion-dollar deficit this year and our debt will continue to explode with this continued lack of leadership."

I voted for the House "Path to Prosperity" budget and I was profoundly disappointed to see it rejected in the Senate. It is unfortunate the president and Senate Majority Leader Reid would rather attack the House-passed budget than work with us to solve the greatest fiscal challenges facing our nation.

Where Are the Jobs?

The president promised in February of 2009 – a month after taking office – that his stimulus plan would keep unemployment below eight percent. As we enter the longest period with a jobless rate over eight percent since the Great Depression, one has to ask the president where is his plan?

Not only has he failed to lift employment, but his policies of borrowing and spending have had the opposite effect. The U.S. Department of Labor recently reported that the number of people not in the work force has grown by 7.8 million from January 2009 to July 2012. A recent survey released by the National Federation of Independent Business found that small business optimism continues to decline.

Since January 2011, the House has passed over 30 bills aimed at freeing business from burdensome red tape and encouraging job creation. The Senate and President Obama have all but ignored our jobs legislation. Mr. President, where are the jobs?

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721 or visit my web site at <http://bonner.house.gov>.

For release the week of August 27, 2012. For more information, please contact Mike Lewis at (202) 225-4931.