

WARD ROOM

Covering Chicago's nine political influencers

MARK KIRK

Mark Kirk's 15-Point Plan to Cut Spending



Getty Images

[Mark Kirk](#) was sworn in for a full term as a United States senator Wednesday. And he finally has a [website!](#)

It's a rudimentary job, with a photo of the senator, a profile lifted from Congressional Biography, and an e-mail form. It only lists two Illinois office, one in [Chicago](#), the other in [Springfield](#). (Kirk's House web page is finally dead, even though it's the number one result on a "Mark Kirk" Google search.)

Unfortunately, the Mark Kirk website is not a good source of Mark Kirk news. The press releases page is empty. You have to do some sleuthing to find communiqués from the new senator's office. We discovered this one on the [website of WIFR](#), the CBS affiliate in Rockford. It outlines 15 anti-spending reforms Kirk is proposing to reduce the national debt. On Tuesday, Kirk told reporters in Chicago that he wants to allow short term extension of debt, while reducing [White House](#) and Congress's spending by 15 percent, and freezing federal hiring, pay and benefits.

Here's Kirk's 15 point plan:

1. Set An Example. Reduce Congressional and White House budgets by 15 percent.
2. Realign Public to Private Pay. Freeze federal civilian pay and benefits.
3. Stop Expanding Public Employment. Freeze federal civilian hiring.
4. Live With Last Year's Budget. Cap discretionary spending.
5. Empower the President to Cut Pork. Enact a reformed presidential line-item veto.
6. Prevent One Generation from Burdening Another. Enact a balanced budget amendment to the constitution (similar to Senator Simon's S. J. Res. 41).

7. Create Bipartisan Consensus with Power. Establish a new bipartisan “Grace Commission II” to propose anti-spending reforms, linked to authorities to submit reforms for up or down congressional votes.
8. Rationalize Wasteful Federal Holdings Not Being Used.
9. Establish a **Federal Real Estate Disposition Commission** to identify properties that can be sold, with proceeds used to reduce federal debt.
10. Eliminate Unused Buildings/Property. Require the Government Services Administration (GSA) to lease or sell underutilized buildings (GAO reported 22,000 excess and surplus properties in 2007).
11. Align Spending to National Income. Set an annual spending ceiling at 21 percent of GDP and require major asset sales to fund expenditures above that level – real estate, spectrum, direct federal loans or operating assets like the Tennessee Valley Authority.
12. Lower Health Care Costs. Enact medical malpractice reform and reduce the cost of health care.
13. Cut Losses of Big Losers. By reforming Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, taxpayers may mitigate losses of at least \$150 billion and climbing.
14. Create Pentagon Incentives to Rationalize Holdings. The Defense Department should be encouraged to sell outdated inventory and vacated properties, applying half the proceeds to military modernization and half to reduce federal debt.
15. Reduce Spending in the Private Economy. Eliminate half of the 53 corporate welfare programs listed by the CATO institute.

Soon, you'll be able to see this on Kirk's website. In the meantime, check WIFR and Ward Room for Mark Kirk updates.

BY [EDWARD MCCLELLAND](#) // THURSDAY, JAN 6, 2011 AT 06:29 CST

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