

## [Wimpy Republican Leadership Yields to Tea Party; Term Limits and Balanced Budget Amendment Needed to Eliminate "Culture of Spending"](#)

Hats off to new legislative representatives who steadfastly held to the position that more budget cuts are needed. Republican leaders reluctantly went along with those Tea Party demands (which of course shows just how wimpy Republican leadership is when it comes to really doing anything about the budget crisis).

Democrats are screaming of course, clueless about why they lost the election, and what changes are needed.

Please consider [Republican Leaders Yield to a Push for More Budget Cuts](#)

In response to complaints from rank-and-file Republicans that the party was not fulfilling a campaign promise to roll back domestic spending this year by \$100 billion, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee said his panel would abandon its initial plan and draw up a new one to slice spending more aggressively.

The reversal was the most concrete demonstration yet that the wave of fiscal conservatives who catapulted Republicans into the House majority is reshaping the political and policy calculations being made by the party leadership.

Senate Democrats, who will have to negotiate with their Republican counterparts in the House, quickly criticized the plan. "In many cases, these proposals may mean taking workers off the assembly line or taking teachers out of the classroom or police off our streets," Senator Harry Reid, the Nevada Democrat and majority leader, said.

The initial Republican plan called for \$35 billion in cuts for the balance of this year, which has more than seven months yet to run. Republican leaders had said that figure was equivalent to about \$74 billion in cuts had they been applied to the full fiscal year, measured against the budget request made last year by the Obama administration.

But that argument rang hollow to many conservative Republicans who did not relish the idea of explaining to constituents why the new majority was coming up short of the pledge. After Republicans challenged the plan in a closed-door party meeting on Wednesday, Mr. Rogers and his fellow Appropriations Committee leaders say they now intend to provide new cuts that would meet the target of eliminating \$100 billion from Mr. Obama's request in "one fell swoop."

Even with added cuts, the budget plan is unlikely to satisfy all Republicans. Some want even deeper reductions, and others are insisting that any budget bill bar the government from spending money to carry out the new health care law — a provision certain to be summarily rejected by Senate Democrats and the White House.

“If we don’t fight on this ground, there will not be ground this good to fight on again,” said Representative Steve King, Republican of Iowa. He said he was inclined to oppose any measure if the health care law was spared.

The widening division between House Republicans and Senate Democrats raises the prospect that they will be unable to reach agreement to finance the government through Sept. 30 and will instead have to rely on a series of brief extensions. In the event of a total impasse, the government could shut down as it did in 1995.

Republican officials would not divulge details of their planned cuts. But previous disclosures by the Appropriations Committee showed the reductions would reach deep into energy, environmental, education, transportation and housing programs, and totally eliminate more than 60 other federal initiatives.

### **For Smaller Government, Elect Shorter Lawmakers**

Notice how it was new members of Congress forcing the issue. For all their blowhard talk, a lousy \$35 billion was the best the Republican leadership could come up with to reduce a \$1.4 trillion deficit.

In light of that pathetic effort, are we supposed to believe Republicans are going to balance the budget?

Caroline Baum questioned that idea recently in [For Smaller Government, Elect Shorter Lawmakers](#).

The Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives is promising to cut \$100 billion from domestic spending this year. The Tea Party caucus’s response? I’ll see your \$100 billion and raise you \$2.4 trillion over 10 years.

Both groups are barking up the wrong tree or, to use a more appropriate animal analogy, putting the cart before the horse. The road to real deficit reduction, not a cosmetic nip and tuck, runs through term limits. If Americans are truly interested in shrinking the size of government -- one of the takeaways from the 2010 midterm election -- they can start by limiting the amount of time lawmakers are allowed to serve.

This would require a constitutional amendment (see *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton*, 1995), no mean feat, requiring as it does approval by a two-thirds majority in Congress. But not impossible either. Recent events in the Middle East demonstrate just how potent people power can be.

Would it surprise you to learn that newbies in Congress (those who have served six years or less in the House and 12 or less in the Senate) are more likely to vote for fiscal restraint than veteran lawmakers? Or that this finding was based on votes taken from 1995 through 1998, when Republicans controlled both houses of Congress? Even Newt Gingrich’s class of ‘94, determined to shrink the size and scope of government, couldn’t buck the Old Guard, according to the results of this Cato Institute study.

In the last two years, the spending increases in bills proposed by freshman House Democrats were 60 percent lower than those sponsored by their more senior colleagues, according to Peter Sepp, vice president for communications at the National Taxpayers' Union. The GOP freshmen proposed 15 percent more cuts in spending than the old-timers.

It turns out the old adage is true: The longer they stay, the more they spend. It's what political scientist James L. Payne calls "The Culture of Spending," the title of his 1991 book.

"What goes on is a socialization process: a nicer way of saying indoctrination," Payne said in a telephone interview. "One is surrounded by people who have a biased reason for arguing that federal spending is good, necessary, wise and proper. There's no reason for anyone to enter this process if he believes it's unwise or unethical."

Clearly the Paul family, father Ron and son Rand, stands out as an exception.

Like most human beings, lawmakers want to help. So they blithely vote for more spending because, quite simply, if they don't put their hand in the cookie jar, someone else will.

When was the last time a constituent walked into his congressman's office and asked for cuts in popular government programs? Unless you believe in fairy tales, a prerequisite for smaller government is short-term legislators.

### **Balanced Budget Amendment Needed as Well**

Republicans scream and holler for smaller government, yet never act on it.

Why? Because they are always worried about getting reelected thus fear cutting programs that voters may want. Term limits would eliminate that worry.

A balanced budget amendment would sure help too. Want that pet project? OK but raise taxes to pay for it. Want to waste \$trillions on needless defense programs? Some thing, have the guts and decency to raise taxes enough to pay for it. Otherwise the Fed may monetize the debt, debasing the currency.

Then again, as long as sweeping changes are being made, let's get rid of the Fed too.

Democrats and Republican hypocrites alike refuse to do what they were elected to do. Term limits and a balanced budget amendment would force them.

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