

# BREAKING NEWS

## **GOP FOCUS:**

### **Chip away at deficit on backs of federal workers**

January 21, 2011

(NATIONAL) -- Federal government workers may be shaping up to be the nation's new bogey man in the battle of the deficit.

A series of measures proposed Thursday by conservatives in the U.S. House to shrink the federal deficit include several that would fall heavily on federal government workers, according to a report in the Washington Post.

The *Republican Study Committee* unveiled a plan called the "Spending Reduction Act of 2011."

Among other things it calls for:

Extending President Obama's pay freeze on federal employees from two years to five, cutting the civil service by 15 percent through attrition over a decade, and prohibiting federal workers from serving as union officials on government time.

Republicans have already moved to reduce congressional salaries by 10 percent and force federal workers to take two-week furloughs.

The lawmakers claimed these and other changes they proposed would help eliminate \$2.5 trillion in spending over that 10-year period.

It is not known if this current proposal is part of a larger plan hatched by the GOP – and reported in December - of a previously alleged secret flank attack on government unions; a starve-the-beast strategy that has to do with the sale of bonds by states.

That story began as a Dec. 7 column by Reuters news service columnist James Pethokoukis and developed later into a major news story for its implications for the federal work force.

Pethokoukis wrote, "Congressional Republicans appear to be quietly but methodically executing a plan that would a) avoid a federal bailout of spendthrift states and b) cripple public employee unions by pushing cash-strapped states such as California and Illinois to declare bankruptcy. This may be the biggest political battle in Washington, my Capitol Hill sources tell me, of 2011."

Pethokoukis claims the secret flank attack on unions has to do with the sale of bonds, referring to what he calls the most "intriguing aspect" of President Barack Obama's tax deal with Republicans.

That story can be found [here](#)

The Washington Post story, located [here](#) says this latest GOP proposal faces an uphill battle to become law as they would have to pass the Democratic-controlled Senate and be signed by President Obama.

### **ONE GROUP THE GOP DID NOT TARGET FOR CUTS**

Of note, the GOP's "Spending Reduction Act of 2011" did not target for wage cuts or job eliminations the one group most directly responsible for the nation's exploded and bloated deficit spending problem -- the elected House and Senate lawmakers who approved and presided over every national spending budget of the past thirty years.

Perhaps lost on the GOP's newly found focus on fiscal responsibility is the fact that Republicans - under the leadership of President George W. Bush and the then Republican controlled House & Senate - authorized and approved a record breaking wild government spending spree.

Spending in Republican Bush's first year in office (FY2001) was \$1.863 Trillion dollars, which means he presided over an 83-percent increase in overall federal spending, which includes defense, domestic, entitlements, and interest.

Even without TARP and Fannie/Freddie, spending was up a huge 70 percent under Bush over eight years.

By contrast, total spending under eight years of President Clinton increased just 32 percent. These are the overall increases in nominal dollars, according to the Cato institute

When all the numbers are tallied George W, Bush – who shared spending authorizations with his Republican colleagues, many of whom are now very concerned over spending - was the biggest government spender of taxpayer dollars since Democrat LBJ.

Bush's s spending increases were far larger than the three prior presidents, according to the Cato Institute.

#### **SEE SPENDING CHARTS AT UPPER RIGHT**

Bush was “the biggest domestic spender since Nixon and set the stage for explosive spending growth,” said a Cato report on a domestic spending under President Bush.