



Washington Whispers

By Paul Bedard



Conservatives: Spending Freeze Would Save \$2 Trillion

By [PAUL BEDARD](#)
Posted: July 28, 2011

House conservatives vowing to vote against Speaker [John Boehner](#)'s plan have seized on a much simpler plan put forward by the libertarian Cato Institute: Put a real freeze on [spending](#) and that alone will save \$2 trillion a year in 10 years.

[[See a collection of political cartoons on the budget and deficit.](#)]

"What Boehner's proposing is going to be \$1 trillion [more spending] next year than it was last year. Why don't we just freeze everything? Everybody get what they got last year. Why shouldn't they be happy? We're in a crisis," Rep. [Ron Paul](#) said on Fox News today.

Here's what he and others are talking about. The Boehner plan caps spending to reduce budget deficits by about \$915 billion between 2012 and 2021. The cuts, says Cato, are based on Congressional Budget Office spending baselines which go from \$3.6 trillion now to \$5.7 trillion in 10 years. [[See 6 consequences if the debt ceiling isn't raised.](#)]

"You could freeze total spending," said Chris Edwards, director of tax policy studies for Cato, "and you'd be saving \$2 trillion by 2021."

He explained that federal spending is \$3.6 trillion this year rising to \$5.7 trillion by 2021. "Thus a hard freeze on all spending would be saving \$2.1 trillion a year by 2021."

That kind of freeze would be unrealistic, but possibly acceptable until the deficit comes down, say some conservatives. [[Check out U.S. News's new iPad app.](#)]

[According to Congressional Budget Office](#), Boehner's plan places caps on expected spending. It makes cuts on expected spending of nearly \$1 trillion.

Edwards has a [chart](#) of actually spending under Boehner's plan that shows discretionary spending. His analysis: "Spending increases every year—from \$1.043 trillion in 2012 to \$1.234 trillion in 2021."

On [Fox](#), Paul also said he isn't willing to give in to the GOP leadership's pressure for a vote for the Boehner plan. "Why should I make conditions worse?"

- [See a slide show of 6 ways to raise the debt ceiling.](#)
- [See a slide show of 6 consequences if the debt ceiling isn't raised.](#)
- [Vote now: Will there be a debt ceiling deal?](#)

[More Washington Whispers posts](#)