

# Townhall

## Tide Pod Republicans

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I am worried that Republicans in Congress have been eating Tide Pods lately. Tide Pods can kill you and Republicans are in the process of killing the Republican Party with this latest budget agreement. There is no other explanation.

What else explains the irrational and liberal policies that Republicans pushed in the latest budget agreement? This agreement is a complete sell-out of the pillar of the 2016 Republican Party platform, which reads in part:

“Our national debt is a burden on our economy and families. The huge increase in the national debt demanded by and incurred during the current Administration has placed a significant burden on future generations. We must impose firm caps on future debt, accelerate the repayment of the trillions we now owe in order to reaffirm our principles of responsible and limited government, and remove the burdens we are placing on future generations. A strong economy is one key to debt reduction, but spending restraint is a necessary component that must be vigorously pursued.”

That was written two years ago, and it sounds dated. The party has evolved much, and Republicans are running away from the platform at record speed with this agreement that clearly violates the letter and spirit of the platform.

D.C. opinion leaders have panned the deal. Paul Winfree of the Heritage Foundation Tweeted that “once you include disaster relief, non-defense OCO, and wildfires the budget deal’s non-defense discretionary spending level for FY2018 is 311% HIGHER than Obama’s request in his last budget.” Chris Edwards of the Cato Institute writes that this agreement undoes the Trump tax cuts and argued “the sad irony is that December’s Republican tax cut is supposed to save Americans \$1.5 trillion over 10 years. But the new spending is essentially a \$1.5 trillion tax hike imposed on people down the road.” The benefits of tax cuts are offset by this deal that piles future debt, and higher taxes, on future generations.

According to an analysis done by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget using Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and Joint Committee on Taxation data discretionary caps for the next two years are hiked by \$290 billion, disaster relief increases by \$72 billion, repeal of IPAB costs \$17 billion, tax extenders totals \$17 billion, health provisions \$9 billion and other program changes cost another \$9 billion. That totals \$419 billion in cost in just two years.

Some of the offsets are gimmicks and don’t pass the laugh test like extending the mandatory sequester through 2027 that gets them \$35 billion in fake savings in the out years. Congress is suspending the sequester for the next two years and there is no way Congress will allow the sequester to kick in after this budget agreement expires. Two other fake savings are favorite

budget gimmick to drawdown the Strategic Petroleum Reserves and a long-term extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for four more years that allegedly "saves" \$5 billion. Only in Washington would an extension of a massive government health care program save money.

The leadership of the Republican Party in the House and Senate were given control of Congress by the American people to shrink, not grow, government. This budget deal will result in at least trillion-dollar deficits as far as the eye can see and sends a message that Republican leaders don't care about spending and debt. This bill is likely to cause many conservatives to stay home this fall and makes it far more likely that Democrats take over the House. It is sad that Republicans hold power and agreed to an Obama-era like piece of legislation that will bring back annual \$1 trillion deficits we experienced during the last administration.

My former boss, Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), took a brave stand against the leadership of his own party in the Senate so that he could secure one vote on reinstating mandatory budget cuts. The leadership of the Senate was so committed to the budget busting agreement that they were willing to shut the government down for a few hours rather than allow one 15-minute roll call vote on Senator Paul's amendment. The leaders purposely waited until the last minute to roll out this massive spending bill so that the American people would not have any time to understand or voice concerns about the spending bill. Congress has just committed future generations to pay for massive new spending over the next decade.

Are these guys taking the Tide Pod challenge during Republican leadership meetings? That is the only explanation for the actions of Republican congressional leaders over the past week.