

Published: August 5, 2012 3:00 a.m.

Letters to the editor

Partisanship prevents significant progress

Some claim that bipartisanship caused our fiscal mess and that uncompromising partisanship is the solution. History does not support those claims.

In 2004, Doug Bandow (a fiscal conservative, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, and a former visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation who served as a special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) reported on an analysis of government spending since 1953. Higher spending occurred when one party was in power, whether Republican or Democrat. Lower spending, lower taxes and more reforms occurred when government was divided.

Unlike currently, divided government historically has prompted bipartisanship. The greatest fiscal restraint occurred under Presidents Eisenhower, then Clinton, then Nixon/Ford, and then Reagan, all with divided government and bipartisanship. These periods also resulted in significant reforms in taxes, agriculture, telecommunications and welfare.

Real federal outlays grew most quickly under Presidents Kennedy/Johnson, then George W. Bush, and then Carter, all with partisanship. As for real domestic discretionary spending, the biggest spenders were George W. Bush, then Gerald Ford, then Nixon.

We have the opportunity and ability to address our needs. The stand-your-ground stance is squandering them.

CEPHAS WILLIAMSON Fort Wayne