

Budget cuts a good deal for taxpayers?

Share this

• Sign Up to

•

• [Email](#)

• [Print](#)

• 



[Roger Pilon](#) Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

Tuesday's Arena question captures perfectly what's missing from our current budget debate. In listing a few of the compromises contained in the six-month spending bill House Republicans posted overnight, and asking whether those cuts (and increases) go far enough in attacking the deficit and national debt, it invites us to imagine that America is one big family, arguing over how "we" should spend "our" money.

We're not. As I wrote in last Thursday's [Wall Street Journal](#), we're a constitutional republic, populated by discrete individuals, each with our own interests. Today's question, perfectly understandable in the current climate, socializes us. The Framers' Constitution freed us, to make our own individual choices.

To be sure, we have to start where we are today. But if that's as far as we go, we're doomed to never grasping the real problem. The Constitution was written precisely to check our appetite for "public goods." It authorizes only a few, truly public goods. Not health care. Not education. Not most of what we spend "our" money on today. We've ignored the discipline it imposes, and we're paying the price.

Archives

Archives