

# The Street

TheStreet.com

November 18, 2011

## What Politicians Say About the Super Committee

By Joe Deaux

NEW YORK ([TheStreet](#)) -- The congressional "super committee" that's been given the responsibility to make federal budget cuts hopes to make a decision Wednesday before \$1.2 trillion in automatic cuts are eventually "triggered." But politicians remained divided on what approach to take.

To get a sense of leading political figures' disjointedness about budget cuts, TheStreet has compiled what they're saying. Republican or Democrat, it seems that none of them can agree whether they're in opposing parties or on the same side of the aisle.

The supercommittee has 12 members -- six Republicans and six Democrats, equally divided between House and Senate. They are: Co-Chairman Sen. Patty Murray (D., Wash.), Sen. John Kerry (D., Mass.), Sen. Max Baucus (D., Mont.), Sen. Pat Toomey (R., Pa.), Sen. Jon Kyl (R., Ariz.), Sen. Rob Portman (R., Ohio), Co-Chairman Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R., Texas), Rep. Dave Camp (R., Mich.), Rep. Fred Upton (R., Mich.), Rep. James Clyburn (D., S.C.), Rep. Xavier Becerra (D., Calif.) and Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D., Md.).

If the panel reaches an agreement by Nov. 23 (the day before Thanksgiving), Congress then has one month to vote on it. But if no agreement is reached, the \$1.2 trillion in spending cuts will start automatically in 2013, split evenly between defense and non-defense spending. Below is some of what U.S. politicians have said about the committee's work.

### President Barack Obama

"In August ... we also said that in order for us to move towards a more stable fiscal condition that we're going to have to get an additional \$1.2 trillion -- minimum. I actually argued that we needed more than that. ... I've put forward a very detailed approach that would achieve \$3 trillion-plus in savings. ... My hope is that over the next several days, the congressional leadership on the super committee go ahead and bite the bullet and do what needs to be done -- because the math won't change. ... There are no magic beans that you can toss on the ground and suddenly a bunch of money grows on trees." -- Nov. 14.

### **Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D., Nev.)**

"Did we talk about the super committee? Yeah, but it was non-substantive. I have my people who are working on trying to come up with something and so does [Speaker John Boehner]. I cannot negotiate something that I have assigned three Democratic senators who ... certainly understand the caucus." -- Nov. 15.

### **House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.)**

"We are in 'the stretch' as far as the work of the super committee is concerned. Democrats continue to be committed to big, bold, and balanced in terms of a proposal that could come out of there. Each day it looks like I don't know whether they are bargaining positions or whether they're ruling out possibilities, but let me say this. The committee has paid great attention to the need for us to reduce the deficit on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol. ... I believe in good faith, my members believe in good faith by Democrats and Republicans alike, to pursue some possible provisions for an initiative that hopefully is big, bold and balanced but will definitely be balanced." -- Nov. 17.

### **House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio)**

"Listen, we've made promises to ourselves that our kids and grandkids cannot afford. And we have to deal with it. ... I think it is important for our government to solve our deficit and our debt problem. And -- and we need to take a big step in the right direction. So I'm going to do everything that I can to ensure that the super committee is successful." -- Nov. 6 on *ABC's "This Week"*

### **Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney**

"Gov. Romney does not believe that more revenues and tax increases are the answer to our fiscal woes. He believes that we need to aggressively cut federal spending, cap spending at 20% of GDP, and put in place a balanced budget amendment. He has laid out a detailed plan to cut spending and restore fiscal responsibility to Washington." Spokeswoman Andrea Saul, Nov. 18.

### **Former Godfather's Pizza CEO Herman Cain**

Perhaps you have heard that the so-called congressional "super committee" is charged with finding \$1.2 trillion in deficit-reduction savings (over a decade, mind you) by the Friday after Thanksgiving. ... It's very unlikely the "super committee" will achieve anything meaningful with respect to budget discipline. While there are many reasons for this, the biggest is the lack of presidential leadership. ... There's your \$1.2 trillion in savings, wiped out not in a single bound, but in two of them. Super, indeed." -- Nov. 13.

### **Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich**

"Secret negotiations among a handful of members will lead to a gigantic bill no one understands. That bill will then move to an up or down vote with no hearings, no understanding and no amendments. ... We have moved from 'We the People' to 'we the insiders,' and it is profoundly wrong. ... I don't want the super committee to go big, I want it to go away. ... The idea of a \$4 trillion tax and spending bill being rammed through congress with no hearings, no markups, no expert analysis, no citizen participation is exactly wrong." -- Nov. 17.

**Former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman**

"The fact that we even have a super committee shows the utter failure of this president to deal with our debt crisis. We need real, structural reforms, with no sacred cows, to get our budget in line." -- Nov. 18.

**Rep. Ron Paul (R., Texas)**

"The sentiment is very strong, both right and left. They're [the super committee] obsessed with militarism; they're obsessed with more wars; they're obsessed with our foreign policy. ... But I think the American people know there's big trouble. ... Meanwhile, politicians are still fiddling while the country burns." -- Nov. 16 at [the Cato Institute](#).

**Rep. Michele Bachmann (R., Minn.)**

"In all likelihood, they're not going to reach an agreement." -- [Nov. 7](#).

**Former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum**

"I'm not surprised that President Obama has deferred yet another tough major decision to someone else - he's proven incapable of leading since day one. Most Americans realize we don't need another bureaucratic Washington committee wasting time and taxpayer money. I'm running for President because we need a strong leader who'll fight for a Balanced Budget Amendment - the only solution that stops out of control spending - permanently." -- Nov. 18.

-- *Written by Joe Deaux in New York.*