

Related News: [U.S.](#) · [Politics](#)

# Senators Warner, Chambliss to Put U.S.'s Debt Atop Agenda in Next Congress

By Heidi Przybyla - Dec 20, 2010 3:25 PM ET

[Tweet](#) 21 [More](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)



Senator Mark Warner. Photographer: Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg

Senators [Mark Warner](#) and [Saxby Chambliss](#) will seek to put the U.S. debt atop the agenda in next year's Congress by offering measures to cut government spending, reduce popular tax breaks and trim entitlement programs.

Warner, a Virginia Democrat, and Chambliss, a Georgia Republican, have been working over the past six months to court a group of 25 senators from both sides of the political aisle in a bid to gather support for their bill, Warner said today in an interview.

The legislation is based on a plan by the co-chairs of President [Barack Obama](#)'s debt-reduction panel that earlier this month failed to get enough support for its recommendations to be sent to Congress.

"Why not take their work and amend off that?" said Warner, who casts the bill as an effort "to get the ball rolling" on the congressional debate over how to tame the nation's \$1.3 trillion federal [budget deficit](#).

"You just have to start with some building blocks," he said. "You've got to take on entitlements, you've also got to take on revenues."

In comments to reporters, Chambliss said he is expecting to offer "a comprehensive bill that's going to be a pretty major package."

### Long Odds

The bill may face long odds since Obama's 18-member commission, a mix of elected and unelected leaders, couldn't

get the 14 votes necessary to forward the [plan](#) to Congress. Members from both parties opposed its mix of tax increases and spending cuts in programs such as Social Security and

### More Stories

[Foreclosures in Most U.S. States Bypass Judges, Easing Home Sale Process](#)

[Spain's Borrowing Costs Rise on Concern It Will Struggle to Fund Deficit](#)

[Brokerages Will Have to Tell IRS What U.S. Investors Paid for Their Stocks](#)

[Mouse Virus Link to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Is Challenged in Four Studies](#)

[Rate These Stories](#)

[More News »](#)

Advertisement



Dec. 20 (Bloomberg) -- Daniel Mitchell, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, talks about the tax-cut compromise President Barack Obama forged with Republican leaders and signed into law Dec. 17. Vice President Joe Biden said ending tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans will be an administration goal for 2012 and predicted Democrats would be able to advance measures that get more revenue from the highest earners. Mitchell speaks with Lisa Murphy on Bloomberg Television's "Fast Forward." (Source: Bloomberg)

### Market Snapshot >>

[U.S.](#) [Europe](#) [Asia](#)

## Medicare.

Warner's supporters say the push by him and Chambliss will, at a minimum, focus attention on the [deficit](#) and the national debt early in a congressional session that will include many newly elected House and Senate members who made pledges to voters to address the issues.

"This is a group that is going to get momentum and insist on continuing to bring up the deficit at every single moment," said [Maya MacGuineas](#), president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a watchdog group. Even if Congress can't agree on a plan, the bipartisan effort will reassure credit markets "in a way that buys you more time," she said.

MacGuineas has been working with Warner's group, which has met regularly with lawmakers and economists, as well as Federal Reserve Chairman [Ben S. Bernanke](#) and former Comptroller General [David Walker](#).

## Senators' Speeches

During congressional debate on Dec. 15 over extending President [George W. Bush's](#) tax cuts, 18 of the group's members joined together to give speeches on the Senate floor urging action on the deficit by the end of 2011. The lawmakers include Democrats [Amy Klobuchar](#) of Minnesota and [Mark Udall](#) of Colorado and Republicans [Mike Crapo](#) of Idaho and [Bob Corker](#) of Tennessee.

Congress faces a vote early next year on raising the national debt ceiling, which some lawmakers may support only under the condition of a debt reduction bill, said Chambliss.

"If we can use that as leverage, that's an ideal scenario," he said. The 2012 presidential election, which could undermine bipartisanship in Congress, also gives impetus to trying to enact legislation in 2011, he said.

## Panel Plan

The rejected proposal by debt commission co-chairmen [Erskine Bowles](#), a White House chief of staff under former President [Bill Clinton](#), and [Alan Simpson](#), a former Republican senator from Wyoming, would have reduced the annual deficit to about \$400 billion in 2015 and begun reducing the debt.

The plan would have increased taxes by \$1 trillion by 2020 by scaling back or eliminating hundreds of deductions, exclusions or credits such as those allowing homeowners to write off interest on their mortgage payments. It would also have cut individual and corporate income tax rates.

Social Security benefits would have been cut, the gas tax would have gone up by 15 cents, discretionary spending would have been reduced by \$1.6 trillion and Medicare would have been pared by \$400 billion.

Incoming House Budget Committee Chairman [Paul Ryan](#), a Wisconsin Republican, has said he would also include major portions of the Bowles-Simpson plan in legislation next year.

"That's a very positive sign coming from the House and the new majority in the House," said Chambliss.

Ryan was among the commission members voting against sending the co-chairmen's plan to

<b>DOW</b>	<b>11508.40</b>	<b>+30.31 (0.26%)</b>
<b>S&amp;P 500</b>	<b>1250.36</b>	<b>+3.28 (0.26%)</b>
<b>NASDAQ</b>	<b>2657.15</b>	<b>+7.59 (0.29%)</b>

Stocks on the Move

## Most Popular Stories >>

[CBS, Couric Discuss Pay Cut, Wider Role as CNN Waits](#)

[Snow Extends European Air Travel Delays as Holiday Nears](#)

[Soros Gold Bubble at \\$1,384 as Miners Push Buttons](#)

[SEC Said to Start Probe of Mark Hurd's Resignation as Hewlett-Packard CEO](#)

[More Most Popular Stories >](#)

## Advertisements





## Sponsored Links

[How to Buy Gold](#)  
Physical Gold Shipped to Your Door Free Investor Kit. Since 1960.  
[Goldline.com/Buy-Gold](#)

[Currency Trading](#)  
Free Forex Practice Account and Starter Kit from GFT. Learn More.  
[www.GFTforex.com](#)

[Retire To Costa Rica](#)  
Starting at 99K with 20k Down. Register Today For Your Dream Home!  
[www.CostaDevelopers.com](#)

Ads by Google

Congress. He said he did so largely because it failed to call for repeal of health-care overhaul passed into law earlier this year, which he said would worsen the government's fiscal woes.

To contact the reporters on this story: [Heidi Przybyla](#) in Washington at [hprzybyla@bloomberg.net](mailto:hprzybyla@bloomberg.net);

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Mark Silva at [msilva34@bloomberg.net](mailto:msilva34@bloomberg.net).



**Related News**  
**U.S. - Politics**

Sponsored Links  
[dbFX: Online FX Trading from Deutsche Bank](#)

# Bloomberg

Rate this Page

Go to the old version of Bloomberg.com

## News

- Exclusive
- Worldwide
- Regions
- Markets
- Industries
- Economy
- Politics
- Law
- Environment
- Science
- Opinion
- Muse: Arts, Culture & Spend
- Sports

## Market Data

- Stocks
- Rates & Bonds
- Currencies
- Mutual Funds
- ETFs
- Commodities
- Economic Calendar

## Personal Finance

- TV
- Radio
- Video
- Podcasts
- Personalities
- Keene On Demand
- Mobile
- Leaders
- Technology

## More from Bloomberg

- Bloomberg Businessweek
- Business Exchange
- Bloomberg on Twitter
- Bloomberg on Facebook
- Bloomberg Briefs
- Bloomberg Government
- 日本語サイト
- Bloomberg Law
- Bloomberg Link
- Bloomberg Markets Magazine
- Bloomberg New Energy Finance
- Bloomberg Open Symbology
- Bloomberg Press
- Bloomberg Sports
- Bloomberg UTV

## Company

- About Bloomberg
- Solutions
- Careers
- Contact Us
- Press Room
- Help
- Sitemap
- Trademarks
- Feedback