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## Should the GOP break their anti-tax pledge?

By: Roger Pilon – November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012

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Republicans should break their anti-tax pledge only if they enjoy being irrelevant. America doesn't need two tax-and-spend parties. One is one too many.

The post-election drumbeat we're hearing on many fronts - some of it well-placed, as with immigration and gay rights - is aimed transparently at turning elected Republicans into tepid Democrats - as in the 1970s when congressional Republicans were known as the "permanent minority."

That began to change when the party rediscovered its roots in limited government. The no-new-tax pledge distilled that change, but it's been undermined over the years by the propensity of too many Republicans to ignore the spending side of the equation, including defense spending.

Republicans delude themselves - and ignore history - if they think that raising taxes will lead to spending cuts. The so-called sequester's "cuts" aren't really cuts at all: they're reductions in the *growth* of spending. As my colleague Dan Mitchell has written, "if the sequester takes place, total federal spending will climb by \$2 trillion over the next 10 years instead of \$2.1 trillion."

In this lame duck session, Republicans should stand their ground, vote to extend the Bush tax cuts for another year, and wait for the next Congress to try to make the fundamental changes in our tax system that are so sorely needed. Above all, they've got to expose the zero-sum mindset that informs the Democrats' economic vision. Yes, deficits and debt - federal, state, and local - are undermining our future. But only an expanding economy will solve those problems. More taxes will worsen them, driving us into the abyss Europeans currently enjoy.