

From: Ed DeVilbiss  
Sent: 3/25/2016 11:38:50 AM  
To:  
Cc:  
Subject: Fwd: Republican Budget Spends Too Much

Friends,

I thought you might like to see what our conservative members of the House are doing. We don't balance the budget by spending more. ED

Dear Edwin,

The House of Representatives has adjourned for their spring break. They've left town and won't be back for almost three weeks. In the meantime, House Republican leaders have not brought their 2017 budget up for a vote. And you know why? Because economic conservatives have stood their ground and said "no" to high spending levels that were set last year by Barack Obama and John Boehner.

Our economic champions are fighting to stop the federal government from breaking spending caps that Congress and the president agreed to in 2011. And this week, I've asked one of those pro-growth fighters to give you a full report.

## **THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET SPENDS TOO MUCH**

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**Congressman Mick Mulvaney | March 24, 2016**

The US House was supposed to take up its proposed FY2017 budget this week.

Many fiscal conservatives already announced their intention to oppose it. That may not surprise some people, most notably those who regularly accuse us of opposing just about everything, but even a brief examination of the situation

reveals that supporting the budget is a bad idea for Republicans.

The current budget battle is the next move in a chess game that goes back to the summer of 2011. As a result of the labyrinth of spending deals that, since then, has brought us the Ryan-Murray agreement, the Super Committee, the Sequester, and the Budget Control Act, Congress's discretionary spending was set at \$1.040 trillion for FY2017. (The roughly \$3 trillion in other "mandatory" spending, such as Social Security and Medicare, is "off-budget," a topic which begs a longer discussion another time.)

That was the case, at least, until John Boehner gave Congress a going away present in November of last year: a deal with President Obama that would raise the debt ceiling, increase spending in 2016, **and** raise the spending level to \$1.070 trillion for FY2017.

(A quick aside: talking in "trillions" and using decimal points to the thousandth place tends to minimize the scope of the issue. Expressed another way, the difference becomes stark: \$30,000,000,000. That's \$30 billion. That's roughly what we spent last year on NASA, the FBI, and the FDA, **combined**.)

Few Republicans – 79, in fact – supported the Boehner-Obama deal. It only passed with the overwhelming support of 187 Democrats.

And the fight today is the next step of that process: in order to actually spend that money, Congress is supposed to pass a Budget (approving the amount to spend) and then, subsequently, appropriations bills (actually spending it).

So, Republicans are being asked, in a very real way, to give their seal of approval to a spending level that more than 160 of us voted against just six months ago.

And while the opposition to the higher spending level extends well beyond just the House Freedom Caucus, that spending enjoys broad support within the Republican conference. Many defense hawks like it because it provides for additional military spending. The quid pro quo demanded by Democrats – higher social welfare spending – attracts support from many moderate Republicans.

There is also the lure of a proper "appropriations process," which some argue cannot take place without a budget. While appropriations are of great value – it is, after all, the place where the Congress exercises its Constitutional power of the purse – it is far from clear that Congress would actually pass any appropriations bills.

Consider: we are supposed to do 12 appropriations bills a year; I have been there for 5 years, which means that by now we in theory could have passed 60 appropriations bills. In fact, we have passed exactly...zero. The promise of the

power of the purse was used to cajole members to support just about every previous Republican budget, as well, but to no avail. Fool me 5 times, shame on you....

Finally, some of our colleagues support the \$1.070 trillion spending levels because "it is the law." They contend that the House is obligated to follow the Boehner-Obama deal. This argument might carry some weight...*if* the House didn't have a history of regularly ignoring the law on spending levels. The Ryan-Murray agreement, for example, was the law. We broke it. The Sequester was the law. We broke it. And we did so, in both cases, in order to spend more.

Conservatives are simply now suggesting that this time we do it in order to spend less.

But, put aside arguments about the history of the deal, the appropriations process, or the precedential value. All of that is noise. The simple truth, the message that people back home hear, is this: this is more spending. Worse: it is more spending driven by the party that is supposed to be against exactly that.

That is the point that the House Freedom Caucus is trying to make by opposing this budget.

And the point couldn't be timelier: since the Boehner-Obama deal, our national debt has crept past \$19 trillion. Just a month ago, the Congressional budget office warned us that, as a result of the continued anemic growth of the Obama economy, the deficit this year would be over half a trillion dollars. That's \$100 billion higher than we expected in November.

And our response is to...spend more?

Spending, and specifically less of it, is supposed to be one of the things that separates Republicans from Democrats. And while there may be all sorts of arguments in favor of spending more money this year, they only make sense inside the Beltway. What people back home want from their Republicans is fiscal restraint.

Fiscal conservatives and the House Freedom Caucus will continue to try to give them exactly that.

Even if it means opposing our own Republican budget.

*Mick Mulvaney has represented South Carolina's 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District in the US House since 2011. He is a founding member of the House Freedom Caucus.*

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