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July 28, 2011

My Fellow Americans,

Six months after taking the oath of office as a Member of the United States House of Representatives, I have concluded what I clearly suspected all along – that our nation is dealing with a rigid ideology in the White House who is willing to sacrifice the next generation of Americans in the name of his reelection next year.

During the last election I – along with most of my freshman colleagues – ran on a platform to stop the out-of-control spending, to address the ever increasing debt, to take steps to put our economy back on track, and to put people back to work by setting the economic conditions for job growth.

President Barack Obama – our “Campaigner-in-Chief” – proposed a budget in February which continued down the same path of deficit spending. The United States Senate voted 0-97, unanimously rejecting his plan.

President Obama then went to George Washington University and presented a new outline of ideas. He has since given dozens of speeches in which he talks about his “plan” to reverse our nation’s debt by raising taxes on all Americans, refusing to acknowledge his failed budget. But the problem is that the President never presented an actual plan.

In my 22 years of service in the United States Army, I never came across a Commanding Officer who spoke of a plan, yet never presented a plan. Even the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has stated that it is impossible to score a political speech.

The House of Representatives passed a budget proposed by Chairman Paul Ryan. Then, the House passed, with a bipartisan vote, Cut, Cap and Balance. The bill would have raised our nation’s debt limit while cutting spending, capping future spending, and mandating that the House and Senate pass a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution. Yet in a political procedural move, Senate Democrats used parliamentary maneuvers to table the bill, not even allowing the duly elected Senators to vote on this common sense plan.

In fact, the Democrat-controlled Senate is on day 820 without introducing or passing a budget – one of the Constitutional mandates of the Congress.

The simple fact is this – the President of the United States and the Democrat-controlled Senate has failed to lead, instead choosing to engage in political grand-standing which has put our country on a very dangerous path of fiscal catastrophe.

Majority Leader Harry Reid, Senators Dick Durbin, Chuck Schumer, and their band of progressive liberals have a simple principle - wed as many people as possible to the dependence of the Federal Government. They know no other way and believe they know better than you, the American People.

Further, they continue to be on the defensive line to do everything to protect their Quarterback-in-Chief from getting sacked.

Quite simply, the President is holding the debt ceiling hostage in order to ensure he does not have to address his failed fiscal policies before Election Day, 2012.

The American people are too smart to be fooled, Mr. President. In fact, the American people know better than you. The American people know that the mess we are in is not their fault, but the fault of politicians who spend, and spend, and spend. They are tired of having to front the government's irresponsibility.

President Obama continues to say we need a balanced approach and we need to raise the debt ceiling until after the next general election. The American people are much too smart to be fooled.

Speaker Boehner is now proposing another plan, while not perfect; it is a real plan to take the first of many necessary steps to move our nation forward. The Budget Control Act will ensure that 1) we will cut spending more than any increase in the debt ceiling and put in place spending caps for future government spending, 2) taxes are not increased on America's job creators and families during these difficult economic times, and 3) that both the House and Senate are forced to vote on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, which will enshrine fiscal responsibility in the Constitution.

The Budget Control Act is far from perfect but the hard reality is that fiscal conservatives control only one-half of one-third of our government. This bill will make sure the President does not receive a blank check to continue his spending binge and that the old ways of Washington, DC- blindly increasing the debt limit without spending cuts- are over. This vote is historic- it is the first time we are raising the debt ceiling with cuts greater than the increase.

I learned when I was a soldier at Fort Irwin National Training Center that when Officers waste too much time trying to come up with the perfect plan, they fall short because they are too inflexible or divided to see the path to victory. However, if you can come up with a 70-75 percent plan and execute it well, then you can win- and that's what we have in the Budget Control Act.

The Budget Control Act is not perfect, but it is the 70 percent plan that my colleagues and I can execute to 100 percent.

It is now time for the focus to be on the United States Senate to produce a plan to take this country forward.

Finally, my fellow Americans, I ask you: If I had voted "No" on the Budget Control Act, who would I have been voting for?

Steadfast and Loyal,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allen B. West". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Allen B. West
Member of Congress