

**(WASHINGTON)---- Congressman Allen West Statement for the Congressional Record:
The Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year
2011, H.R. 1473**

Mr. Speaker: This past weekend I had an important milestone occur in my life. My oldest daughter, Aubrey, turned 18 years old. It seems like it was only yesterday that I held this small baby in the palm of my hand and now she is a grown mature woman about to start college and begin the next phase of her life.

I flew back to Florida last Saturday so that I could be with her on this very special day in her life. Turning 18 is important for every American. Because at 18 years old, under the law, you are now considered an adult and she was proud to register for the most important right – the right to vote for our elected leaders.

When my daughter was born in 1993 the Federal Government debt was \$4.3 trillion. Just 18 years later, I will shortly be faced with a vote on whether to raise the debt limit to over \$15 trillion dollars. When I held my daughter as a baby, I never thought that our nation would be in such financial distress and on its way to a major economic catastrophe.

Over the weekend, as I celebrated with my daughter, I thought even harder about what the

United States will be like when she will be my age and what would her son or daughter, my grandchildren, think when they look back in the history books at this critical time in our Republic's history.

Last November, the citizens of the 22nd Congressional District, and millions of Americans, voted for a new direction for our country. They sent a message to our elected representatives that we needed to end out-of-control government spending, reduce our national debt, and get our fiscal house in order.

The Democrat Majority and President Obama over the last two years have produced deficits of \$1.4 and \$1.25 trillion, and the President has produced a Budget for Fiscal Year 2012 which would add another \$1.6 trillion. The American people know that the federal government is collecting \$2.2 trillion and spending \$3.7 trillion this year.

The American people know that forty cents of every dollar the federal government spends is borrowed, much of it from China. The American people also know our nation is piling up new debt at the rate of \$4 billion a day.

The Era of Big Government Spending is Over! In 100 days the debate in Washington has gone from a freeze in government spending to addressing cuts in spending.

As we are all aware, the 111th Congress was controlled by overwhelming Democrat majorities in the House of Representatives and the United States Senate. Yet even with these enormous majorities, Congress failed to pass a budget or any of the Appropriations bills.

Members of the former Majority Party in the House of Representatives have now resorted to the political rhetoric that the Republican Party is trying to kill women, starve seniors, and the budget deal is the functional equivalent of bombing innocent civilians. They make these statements even after Majority Leader Reid and President Obama recognize that we need to cut federal spending,

This type of political rhetoric is beneath us. We can disagree on the direction we are taking our nation, but let us have a debate on the facts and policies. The American people demand an adult conversation instead of childish name calling.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to briefly summarize my thoughts and votes during the negotiations for the Budget for Fiscal Year 2011. I voted for the first short term Continuing Resolution in the 112th Congress in order to provide Speaker Boehner the necessary time to negotiate with an intransigent United States Senate and White House.

I voted against the second Continuing Resolution because I believed that we were continuing to

kick a can down the road, and that the Obama Administration and Members of the Democrat Party wanted to force the Federal Government into a shutdown in order to win political points. It seems their goal is the hope that by shutting down the Federal Government, the American people will perceive an inflexible Republican Party and return the Democrats to power in the next election.

I voted for the Department of Defense Appropriations bill, which contained another short term Continuing Resolution, in order to support my Brothers and Sisters in uniform. However, I made the Leadership of the Republican Party aware that I believed using the military as a bargaining chip in the negotiations as a way to pass yet another continuing resolution was indefensible.

As the clock approached the time to shut down the Federal Government, an agreement was finally reached. In order to draft the bill and provide time for the American people to review the bill, the House considered, and I voted in favor of another Short Term Continuing Resolution. I always stated it was never my intention to shutdown the Federal Government.

At the Army Airborne school in 1984 I had a black hat instructor say, "If you set the bar low, you will jump low!" Today, I will be voting against the negotiated agreement because I believe that we set the bar too low and it does not fulfill the promise I made to the constituents of the 22nd Congressional District of Florida. While this bill is a step in the right direction, I am voting against the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2011, H.R. 1473 because it is important for elected leaders to stand by the pledges we make to the American People.

It takes five miles to turn an aircraft carrier, I am pleased, that finally, the Republican Leadership has finally taken control of the helm and begun to turn the wheel. However, I believe we need to turn the wheel a little harder. At this moment in our nation's history, when the facts are so clear and the political hyperbole is so hollow, my vote reflects that we need more to get our ship of state on the right course.

That is what my adult daughter Aubrey expects, that is what my teenage daughter, Austen expects, that is what my wife Angela expects and that is what every American expects.