

Allen West apologizes to America for failure of Congress on debt (The Hill)

By Pete Kasperowicz

Freshman Rep. Allen West (R-Fla.) on Thursday evening apologized to his constituents and the nation for the failure of Congress to rein in federal spending during the first session of the 112th Congress.

"As we enter the final days of 2011, and approach the end of this first session of the 112th Congress, I must take the time to offer an apology to the citizens of the 22nd congressional district of Florida, and to all my fellow citizens across this great nation," West said on the House floor.

"It is not because we haven't changed the conversation here in Washington D.C., but because I would have hoped our exertions would have been, as a collective body, a bit greater."

West said failing to pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution was a "great disappointment" to him, and is a prime example of a "lack of exertion" of the Congress, but also cited the need to rein in federal regulations and do more to help create an environment for economic growth.

West blamed Democrats for blocking progress on these issues.

"The House of Representatives has tried to work with the Senate and President Obama, yet they refused to listen to the will of the people," he said. "Tabling the Cut, Cap and Balance piece of legislation during the debt debate is a prime example.

"Instead, they wished to remain on the same path that has proved to be a failure year after

year," West added. "They refused to believe that we need major structural reforms. They did not heed the message of the American people of November 2010."

West also criticized President Obama for failing to provide leadership in the face of dwindling American competitiveness, rising government debt, and sinking home values.

"Yet with these abysmal statistics, all we hear from the big megaphone of the White House is that we need to tax people, particularly certain people, more," he said, adding that the apparent White House goal is to "create more victims in America."

"There is no leadership emanating from the White House," he continued. "Instead, we have policy by election cycle sound bites, but the purpose is just to get reelected."

At the same time, West seemed to point fingers at both parties for not being willing to do more to handle the issues Congress is facing. West has warned before that Congress does not take enough time to deal with pressing problems, and said Congress is once again faced with another tight timeline next week.

"On the eve of the holiday season, the United States Congress is dealing with some of its most important issues, all while pressed against the desire to be home and with our families and loved ones," he said. But West said members should be willing to stay as long as it takes, and compared it to some of the long military service that he put in while in the Army.

"Every time I was away from home during the holiday season ... I proudly put on my uniform and did my duty on behalf of the American people," he said. "And while I may not wear the uniform of the United States Army any longer, I am proud to put on my new uniform of a suit and tie, and spend this holiday away from home, once again putting our country first, so that we may finish the job our constituents entrusted us to do."

Both the House and Senate are out Friday, and both parties are looking to complete work on extending unemployment insurance, a payroll tax extension, and funding the government past December 16 by next week.

The entire story can be accessed by clicking [here](#) .