

Americans have sent a message to Washington: stop the spending. As I've spoken with people in Missouri, their top priority is changing business as usual on Capitol Hill. Too many people go to Washington and forget why they were elected. They start to see government as the solution—when government is often the cause of America's problems.

In 2010, every penny of federal tax revenue was spent on entitlement programs and paying the interest on our national debt. These entitlement programs—Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, interest on debt, veterans' benefits, unemployment insurance, food and nutrition assistance—will only continue to grow more expensive as baby boomers hit retirement age. Then, after entitlement programs were satisfied, the federal government went on to borrow enough money to fund our national defense and all other government operations. To put it another way, the federal government is borrowing over forty cents of every dollar it spends. The federal government is beyond broke—it has also mortgaged away our future.

For the last forty years, our federal tax revenues have averaged 18% of our GDP, while our spending has averaged 20.4% of GDP. This year, our spending rose to over 24% of GDP and, driven by entitlement spending, it is expected to keep rising, reaching 26.4% of GDP in 2021.

Not only is our current level of spending unsustainable, it jeopardizes our national security as we become increasingly indebted to foreign countries. That is why I recently introduced [H.J. Res. 51](#), the TRUST Amendment (Taking Responsibility for the US Today). This is a constitutional amendment that will force the federal government on to a more fiscally responsible path. TRUST will cap all federal spending at 18% of projected gross domestic product (GDP) for the upcoming budget year. The cap can only be waived with a two-thirds supermajority vote of both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Let me be clear—cutting federal spending to 18% of GDP will not be easy. Non-defense discretionary spending will have to be slashed. Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security must be reformed to reduce our future liability. Other government handouts need to be significantly curtailed, if not canceled. The President and Congress will have to make painful choices, but that is what we should expect of our leaders. At the same time, the American people will feel the consequences of these cuts.

Decades of uncontrolled spending have proven that Congress lacks the willpower to restructure entitlements in a way that brings spending under control. Yet the consequences of continuing on our current trajectory are almost too severe to contemplate. My constitutional amendment will force Congress to make the tough choices that will preserve prosperity and opportunity for future generations. I believe that this is just one step toward taking responsibility for the budget situation we face as a nation.

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