



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on October 17, 2013

Republican Sell-out: White House Wins on Budget, Debt

The Republican congressional leadership [capitulated](#) completely to White House demands for full funding of the federal budget at fiscal 2013 levels and a suspension of the debt limit through February 7.

In the October 16 votes, the House of Representatives [voted](#) 285-144, with 144 Republicans voting nay, and the Senate [voted](#) 81-18, with 18 Republicans voting nay. President Obama signed the bill into law shortly after midnight after the evening votes.



"We fought the good fight," House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said in a press conference after the House Republican leadership capitulated. "We just didn't win." Boehner and his leadership team, including Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Ohio), shown in blue tie, and Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) voted in favor of the bill that failed to make any cuts to federal spending and gave a blank check to the White House to rack up new debt.

The *New York Times* accurately summarized the bill in "The Republican Surrender," a house [editorial](#): "The health care reform law will not be defunded or delayed. No taxes will be cut, and the deal calls for no new cuts to federal spending or limits to social welfare programs."

The [bill](#) funds federal government appropriations at fiscal 2013 levels through January 15, confirms that many federal employees have just finished a two-week paid vacation and suspends the national debt limit until February 7 in a provision of the bill called the Default Prevention Act of 2013. It would also require — in a sop thrown to Republicans — that President Obama verify that those qualifying for subsidies under ObamaCare are indeed qualified to receive those subsidies. The White House panned the provision as symbolic only, and stressed that it would in no way interfere with the funding or implementation of ObamaCare.

The bill also includes a variety of pork barrel projects, including a \$174,000 gratuity to the widow of the recently deceased Democratic Senator Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey (who was [one of the wealthiest members of Congress](#), with an estimated personal wealth of more than \$50 million) and more than [\\$2.1 billion in new money for work on a dam on the Ohio River](#), which borders Senate Republican Minority Leader Mitch McConnell's state of Kentucky. (McConnell [voted](#) for the capitulation and is running for reelection next year.)

Congressman Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), elected with Tea Party support in 2012, was among the majority of House Republicans opposing the bill, [noting](#) that the law "will increase our nation's debt limit by hundreds of billions of dollars while simultaneously refusing to make a single cut or reform to address our nation's spending problem." He noted in a Facebook [post](#), "The only sustainable way to avoid a debt crisis is to balance the federal budget." Massie was among the House Republicans who [voted](#) against the bill.



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Only in America are the ones who want to balance the budget and make raising the national debt limit unnecessary [labeled terrorists](#), and those who want to raise the national credit card limit to infinity deemed “reasonable.”

The debate over the budget and debt limit was symptomatic of the sickness that is infecting both American politicians and mainstream media:

- On the budget, the debate was largely about what was *not* in the spending bills (specifically, funding for ObamaCare), rather than what was in them.
- In the budget debate, the dysfunction in the system has now become the only function. It was once a sign of the failure of the appropriations process that an omnibus “continuing resolution” was needed to fund several of the regular 12 annual appropriations bills. President Obama and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) [insisted](#) that the budget be funded in a single bill, rather than through 12 different appropriations bills, as the rules of both houses of Congress require.
- Most of the budget is on autopilot; Congress [does not vote to spend most of the budget](#) any more. As a result, the vast majority of entitlements such as most of ObamaCare are automatically funded annually without a vote from Congress.
- The media and most politicians trumpeted only one option as a metaphysical necessity throughout the debate: They *must* raise the debt ceiling. Only a few Tea Party-supported congressmen ever discussed the alternative — balancing the budget — which would have made raising the debt ceiling unnecessary.
- The deadline over the debt limit extension seemed phony. Consider that the government shutdown, which stopped funding of 16-18 percent of the federal government during the first two weeks of October, matches almost exactly the projected deficit level for the same fiscal year. Why, if government spending was cut at the same level of the deficit, would the U.S. continue to accumulate debt? Why didn’t the spending reductions, even if temporary, move the deadline needle at all?

Photo of House Majority Leader Eric Cantor: AP Images



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