



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on August 3, 2011

## House Republicans Break Promise to Post Bills Online Three Days Before Vote

The laughably named [Budget Control Act of 2011](#), which [raises the debt ceiling in exchange for minor \(and mostly future\) spending cuts](#), was posted on the House Rules Committee website on August 1 at 1:45 a.m. The House voted on and passed the bill later that same day. Not even 24 hours — let alone the three days promised in the “Pledge to America” — had passed between the posting of the bill and the vote.

[CNSNews.com](#) reminded readers that the “Pledge to America” was not the only place the three-day pledge was made. During a press conference introducing the campaign document, Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) said, “We are taking a pledge today to do a number of things. It starts with requiring that all pieces of legislation be available online for 72 hours — at least 72 hours — so that the public has a chance to review the legislation and members of Congress can actually read the bill.”

Standing directly behind Chaffetz was Rep. John Boehner (R-Ohio), then House Minority Leader, now Speaker of the House, who reiterated the words of both the “Pledge to America” and his colleague from Utah in an October 30 radio address: “The American people are in charge of this country, and they deserve a Congress that acts like it. Americans should have three days to read all bills before Congress votes on them — something they didn’t get when the ‘stimulus’ was rushed into law.”

Republicans looking to explain away their obvious breach of promise may find an out in the language on the House Republican Conference website, which [claims](#) that the vow to post each bill online at least three days in advance of the vote has been fulfilled. However, it qualifies that by referring to the promise as “a three day waiting period on all *non-emergency* legislation.” (Emphasis added.) But as CNSNews.com points out, “the words ‘non-emergency’ or ‘emergency’ do not appear anywhere in the text of the original *Pledge for America* [sic].” Furthermore, says the conservative website, “it might be problematic for House Republicans to call the debt-limit bill a piece of ‘emergency’ legislation” since “the House has been aiming to pass debt-limit legislation by an Aug. 2 deadline ever since May 16.”

CNSNews.com sought comment on the matter from the House Republican Conference as well as several House Republican leaders but received no responses.

It did, however, get the opportunity on Monday to ask House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) whether he would have time to read the entire 74-page debt-ceiling bill before voting on it Monday





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night. Cantor [replied](#), “We will certainly have — our Members will have all the time. It was posted last night at 1:45 a.m.” Several hours might be sufficient time to read the whole thing, but to digest its contents and consider the ramifications thereof would likely take much longer.

On Tuesday Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, did [respond to questions from CNSNews.com](#) about the GOP’s apparent abandonment of its three-day bill posting pledge:

“If this (bill) has a super-majority, if it has the president’s buy-in, if we’ve all known and been involved in seeing it worked out over the 72 hours, then the spirit of the 72 hours was kept,” Issa told CNSNews.com.

Issa also mentioned the Aug. 2 “default” deadline proclaimed by President Obama, noting the deadline could not be met if the bill were to be posted for 72 hours before a vote. “You can’t have 72 hours and not bust the Aug. 2 deadline. So I don’t think anyone in America thinks we are failing to keep the spirit and the reality of the situation.”

Thus, while Boehner and company claimed that Democrats’ ramrodding a \$787 billion “stimulus” bill through Congress was shameful, they apparently believe that Republicans’ similar approach to passing a bill adding \$2.4 trillion to the national debt was within “the spirit” of their pledge to give congressmen and the public three days to read and debate all legislation.

In passing the debt-limit bill, Republicans broke far more important promises than the one in question — for instance, their vow to “adhere to the Constitution.” Still, none better embodies the contempt they have for the voters who sent them to Washington than their violation of the crystal-clear three-day pledge — and their weasel words in attempting to explain it away.



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