



GOP Budget Plan: Condensed, but Constitutional?

On Tuesday, Congressman Paul Ryan (R-Wisc., left) presented his party's version of a 2012 federal budget that they call the "Path to Prosperity." Everyone's talking about it. Either it's a historic and "sweeping reduction" in the size of government or it's an attack on the government itself and an attempt to "reduce government so that it fits in a bath tub."



One of the budgets most laudable provisions is the repeal of the recently enacted 1099 tax regulations imposed by Obamacare.

As the Republican report on the legislation explains:

This budget resolution reflects that choice. It disavows the relentless government spending, taxing, and borrowing that are leading America, right at this moment, toward a debt-fueled economic crisis and the demise of Americas exceptional promise.

It chooses instead a path to prosperity by limiting government to its core constitutional roles, keeping Americas promises to seniors, and unleashing the genius of Americas workers, investors, and entrepreneurs.

The plan touted by Ryan, the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, goes a long way toward eviscerating the Presidents year-old heath care overhaul.

One of the key goals of the fiscal package is to repeal and defund the Presidents health care law, advancing instead common-sense solutions focused on lowering costs, expanding access and protecting the doctor-patient relationship.

The precis of the proposal crows that by obliterating Obamacare, the budget will be:

saving roughly \$725 billion over ten years by repealing the new exchange subsidies and making sure that not a penny goes toward implementing the new law. Then, this budget goes further with reforms that make government health-care programs more responsive to consumer choice.

Not a penny. Thats quite an ambitious goal. If the Republican congress succeeds in hitting such a mark it will be praiseworthy indeed.

What would be even more praiseworthy, however, is if the American people could elect representatives and senators committed to making the same promise (not a penny) regarding *all* unconstitutional projects, programs, and proposals. It seems that if the current proposal deserves such constant and fervent adulation, then how would genuine constitutionalists react to a budget completely devoid of any expenditure not specifically authorized by the Constitution?

As for the gutting of Obamacare, the 60+ page synopsis of the plan warns that were the health care law not repealed, then

the tradeoff in terms of lost freedom would be completely unacceptable. This approach would



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transform the relationship between citizen and state, leaving individuals helplessly dependent on their government. On a more practical level, it would substantially diminish quality of and access to care. There is no way for experts in Washington to know more about the health care needs of individual Americans than those individuals and their doctors know.

The subtitle of the report is Restoring Americas Promise. The details of this promise arent very precisely drawn, but the authors write that in the recent mid-term elections, Citizens stood up and demanded that their leaders reacquaint themselves with Americas founding ideals of liberty, limited government, and equality under the rule of law.

Certainly true. But it is difficult to see how a budget proposal that spends \$40 trillion over ten years, averaging an astonishing \$4 trillion per year can rightly be considered representative of Americas founding ideals of liberty.

For that matter, how does increasing the federal debt from \$15.0 trillion to \$23.1 trillion and authorizing the federal leviathan to spend 19.9% of GDP square with the limited government promise made by the proponents of the Republican budget plan?

In the introduction, the proposal seeks to wrap itself in the impregnable cloak of bipartisanship by declaring, This Path to Prosperity draws upon solutions from across the political spectrum and builds upon the important work of the Presidents bipartisan Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform.

In other words, the Republican sponsors of this budget plan have broadened their scope and drawn ideas from a wide range of sources. So broad is the approach that nearly every sort of unconstitutional outlay finds its way into the proposal.

Finally, under the heading Key Objectives, Congressman Ryans fiscal 2012 federal budget plan insists that if implemented, the cuts contained therein would stop Washington from spending money it does not have on government programs that do not work.

Again, thats not exactly the sort of faithful adherence to the tenets of limited government and founding ideals of liberty established by our Founding Fathers in the enumerated and limited powers granted to the national government in the Constitution.

Rather, it is but another in a series of half-measures decorated with the window dressing of limited government and constitutionalism and foisted on a trusting and hopeful electorate, desperate for lawmakers who will faithfully adhere to their sworn oath to protect the Constitution.



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