



September 6, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
H-107 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Majority Whip
H-329, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
House Republican Conference
1314 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader McCarthy, Whip Scalise, and Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers:

We, the undersigned conservative organizations, strongly oppose any attempt to raise the national debt limit without significant reforms that put our nation on a path to fiscal balance. The conservative activists and members our organizations represent are frustrated by the failure of congressional Republicans to keep their promises to repeal ObamaCare and rein in federal spending.

A debt limit increase – which is effectively another broken promise – risks more frustration in the conservative movement with congressional Republicans at a time when it is critical to gain momentum to pass fundamental, pro-growth tax reform.

In 2011, each of you were clear that a debt limit increase was fiscally irresponsible and could not pass the House of Representatives without corresponding spending cuts. Indeed, the debt limit increase was rejected by an overwhelming margin, without a single Republican vote.¹ The

¹ Roll Call 379, H.R. 1954, 112th Congress (2011) <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2011/roll379.xml>

common theme at the time was that Congress should not increase the national debt unless it also addresses our dire fiscal situation.

Mr. Ryan: “[W]hat we say is that for every dollar that the President wants to raise the debt limit we need to cut more than a dollar in spending. It's really simple. So if he wants \$2 trillion in debt limit increase then we've got to cut more than 2 trillion in spending. We've already offered a budget to cut \$6.2 trillion in spending so we've shown the President plenty of areas in the government where we can cut spending.”

*“In order to do that - if you want to create jobs you've got to get the fiscal situation under control. So it's really about cutting spending, balancing the budget, getting the debt on the right path, and getting job creation, and those are the things that we are talking about.”*²

Mr. McCarthy: “Today's vote sends a clear message to President Obama and Congressional Democrats that their plan to continue down a path of trillion dollar deficits is not an option. As I've said from the beginning, there's not a single House Republican willing to vote to increase our debt limit without significant spending reductions and reforms to address our \$14.28 trillion national debt.”³

Mr. Scalise: “It would be irresponsible to raise the debt ceiling without dramatic spending cuts that address our current financial crisis and get our country back on the path to fiscal responsibility. President Obama and liberals in Congress need to get the message that their reckless spending spree is over, and we will not allow Washington to continue spending money we don't have. We need to have an honest conversation about how we can solve our country's spending crisis, and the time for that conversation to begin is now.”⁴

Mrs. McMorris Rodgers: “Congress should not raise the debt ceiling again unless it's accompanied by significant cuts in government spending and fundamental budget reform. The debate over the debt ceiling is just getting started, and in the weeks ahead, we will have a unique opportunity to change the current course and incentives in our nation's capital to smarter spending and a smaller role for the federal government. For the sake our children and grandchildren, we have to get our national debt under control, and we need to do it urgently.”⁵

The United States' fiscal situation has only gotten worse. Since rejecting a debt limit increase in May 2011, the total public debt has grown by roughly \$5.5 trillion, from \$14.344 trillion to \$19.844 trillion. Moreover, the long-term unfunded liabilities threaten economic growth and prosperity.

² The Office of Rep. Paul Ryan, “Need to Lift Debt Burden to Get the Economy Back on Track,” June 1, 2011 <https://paulryan.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=244194>

³ The Office of Rep. Kevin McCarthy, “McCarthy: Debt Increase Without Spending Reductions And Reforms Is A Non-Starter,” May 31, 2011 <https://kevinmccarthy.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/mccarthy-debt-increase-without-spending-reductions-and-reforms-is-a-non>

⁴ The Office of Rep. Steve Scalise, “Scalise Opposes Clean Debt Ceiling Increase,” May 31, 2011 <https://scalise.house.gov/press-release/scalise-opposes-clean-debt-ceiling-increase>

⁵ The Office of Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, “McMorris Rodgers Votes Against Raising Debt Ceiling,” June 2, 2011 https://mcmorris.house.gov/mcmorris_rodgers_votes_against_raising_debt_ceiling/

With such an ominous picture facing our country, a debt ceiling increase would send a signal that congressional Republicans are not serious about tackling these challenges and that past words were only convenient rhetorical tools with which to criticize a Democratic administration.

We, and our supporters, strongly oppose an increase in the debt limit without corresponding spending cuts or significant regulatory relief and expect Congressional leaders to be consistent and fight for fiscal responsibility, not for more government spending.

Sincerely,

Adam Brandon, President
FreedomWorks

David McIntosh, President
The Club for Growth

Michael Needham, Chief Executive Officer
Heritage Action

David Williams, President
Taxpayers Protection Alliance

Richard Manning, President
Americans for Limited Government

Phil Kerpen, President
American Commitment

Judson Phillips, President
Tea Party Nation

Jonathan Bydlak, President
Coalition to Reduce Spending

Wayne Crews, Vice President for Policy
Competitive Enterprise Institute

Brooke Rollins, CEO
Texas Public Policy Foundation