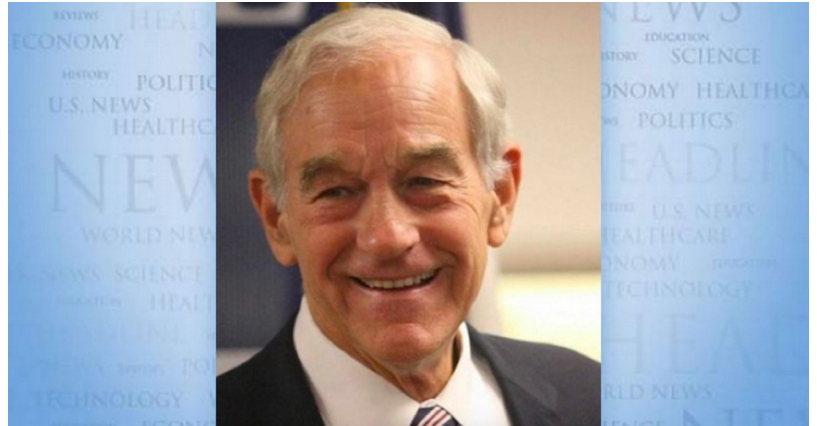




Written by [Ron Paul](#) on March 21, 2016

## Beltway Conservative Budget Plans Are Big Spending and Anti-Liberty

According to a recent poll, 73 percent of all Americans oppose increases in federal spending. Since this anti-government spending sentiment is a major reason Republicans control the House and Senate, one would expect the Republican Congress to hold the line on, or even cut, government spending. Yet, despite the Republican leadership's rhetoric about "fiscal responsibility," this year's House Republican budget spends \$104 billion more than the GOP's 2013 budget.



Some conservatives, most notably the Heritage Foundation, have criticized the GOP budget. Heritage and the conservative House Republican Study Committee (RSC) have both prepared conservative alternatives to the official Republican budgets. Unfortunately, neither Heritage nor the RSC budgets meaningfully reduce federal spending.

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Conservative efforts to reduce the size of government are handicapped by their love affair with the military-industrial complex. Since the Pentagon's budget makes up the largest category of "discretionary" spending, it seems logical that a serious balanced budget plan would reduce spending on militarism.

Yet many of the same conservatives who (rightly) criticize the Republicans for refusing to cut spending not only oppose cuts to the Pentagon budget, they actually call for increases in military spending! These conservatives refuse to admit that the trillions spent on "regime change" overseas have not only failed to turn the targeted countries into Jeffersonian republics but have actually empowered groups like ISIS.

Conservative support for ever-increasing spending on militarism undercuts their efforts to end corporate welfare. Much of the so-called defense budget is wasted on boondoggles like the F-35 fighter that only defend the lifestyles of defense contractors and their lobbyists.

Despite insisting on increased military spending, the Heritage and RSC budgets both, at least on paper, eliminate the deficit in less than ten years. These budgets contain some other positive elements. For example, the RSC budget calls for an audit of the Federal Reserve. Both budgets repeal Obamacare and provide the American people with much needed tax relief.

The good features of the conservative budgets do not cancel out their flaws. For one thing, neither of the conservative budgets actually cuts spending. Instead, they both use the old DC trick of cutting projected increases in spending. Only in DC could budgets that increase domestic spending be considered a "radical attack on the welfare state."

The fundamental flaw in the conservative budgets is philosophical: Like much of modern American conservatism, the budget accepts the notion that that the American government is both constitutionally



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authorized to, and capable of, running the economy, running our lives, and running the world. Hence the “conservative” budgets do little or nothing to scale back the federal role in education, housing, welfare, or commerce.

Conservative budgets reform welfare programs by giving the states more authority and flexibility in administering the programs. This may make marginal improvements in the programs, but it does not make the welfare state moral or constitutional. It also does not make government welfare more efficient or compassionate than private charity.

Similarly, while conservatives promise entitlement reforms that give individuals greater control, they refuse to grant young people the option to care for themselves by opting-out of the government entitlement system.

If America is going to avoid a major economic crisis, government spending and debt must be reduced. However, budgets that merely tinker around the edges of the welfare-warfare state, or only reduce the rate of spending increases, merely postpone the day of reckoning. Only a budget that brings the troops home, shuts down unconstitutional agencies, ends all corporate welfare, and begins unwinding our welfare and entitlement programs will ensure future generations enjoy liberty, peace, and prosperity.

*Ron Paul is a former U.S. congressman from Texas. This article originally appeared at the [Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity](#) and is reprinted here with permission.*



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