



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on February 21, 2011

Federal Deficits Unsustainable: Do the Math

The House Speaker's answer came in response to a question from Pacifica Radio's Leigh Ann Caldwell.

"Do you have any estimate on how many jobs will be lost through this?" she asked, referring to the impact on government payrolls of the Republican majority's plans to reduce Washington's record levels of red ink by cutting federal spending by billions of dollars.

Boehner's reply: "Since President Obama has taken office, the federal government has added 200,000 new federal jobs, and if some of those jobs are lost in this, so be it. We're broke."



As a footnote, Pacifica Radio describes itself as "America's progressive news source." Its idea of good programming is putting folk singer Pete Seeger on the air every Fourth of July to talk about his father's communist ideology, just so listeners don't get too patriotic about America's founding and exceptionalism: "In those early days, he linked up with the communist movement. They had a thing called the Composers' Collective. After all, in Russia they had collectives this and collectives that. And there, they decided, as skilled musicians, they would compose the new music for a new society."

I don't think there were any follow-up programs to explain how the massacres, terror, torture, jailing, executions, famines and mass deportations utilized by the communists to bring about the forced collectivization of the "new society" resulted in the deaths of between 85 million and 100 million people — victims killed by their own governments (see *The Black Book of Communism*, Harvard University Press, for an accounting).

In any case, Boehner is simply attempting to deal with out-of-control Washington spending - projected multitrillion dollar deficits, an accumulated federal debt of \$14 trillion (and another \$12 trillion projected to be added over the next decade), and budget plans from the Obama administration that fall drastically short of even putting a dent in the deficits and debt.

Mr. Obama's current budget proposal, for instance, includes a well-publicized "spending freeze," but the freeze applies to only 12 percent of the budget — freezing operations at their current deficit-producing and bloated levels and leaving the remaining 88 percent of the budget free to fly.

For this year, Obama's budget projects spending of \$3.8 trillion and incoming revenues of \$2.1 trillion, producing a deficit of \$1.7 trillion.

Do the math and it's clear that these massive and unprecedented flows of red ink are simply not sustainable. The current \$14 trillion federal debt averages out to \$45,957 per American — \$183,828 for a family of four.

With only half of U.S. households paying federal income taxes, double that \$183,828 for the half that's



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picking up the tab and the debt equals \$367,656 per taxpaying household.

Double again to account for the \$12 trillion to \$14 trillion in Obama's projected new federal debt over the next decade and the cost climbs to an average of \$735,312 per household paying federal income taxes. Increase the Chinese interest rate on that growing stack of debt and double the price of Saudi oil and we'll be working for nothing, firmly stuck over two barrels.

And we're not supposed to say we can't afford 200,000 new federal workers, or 200,000 more nonworkers? "So be it" is language that's too much — too rough, too uncivil — for some people to hear? We're supposed to drown quietly in the red ink, with unfaltering civility?

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