



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on January 28, 2013

Paul Ryan: Republicans Wanted 260 Percent Increase in Food Stamps

Former Republican vice presidential nominee and Congressman Paul Ryan [told](#) NBC's *Meet the Press* January 27 that the Republican ideas for spending cuts on social welfare programs would have increased the Food Stamp program by 260 percent over a decade, instead of the Democrats' 270 percent. Ryan has nevertheless been reliably touted by the mainstream media as a solid conservative and fiscal hawk.



Meet the Press host David Gregory pressed Ryan — who currently serves as the U.S. House of Representatives Budget Committee chairman — for an example of spending cuts he'd make that would stop the “takers” in society. Ryan said during the presidential campaign that America risked becoming a nation of “makers” who work and “takers” dependent upon government assistance. “Food Stamps, for example,” Ryan [replied](#), “if our reforms went through, they would have grown by 260 percent over the last decade instead of 270 percent. So when you call such reforms ‘savage,’ that, I think, does a disservice to the quality of debate we need to have.”

Ryan made no constitutional argument against limiting the federal government to its enumerated powers, eliminating any programs, or even any year-over-year spending cuts. He also volunteered that the federal government should be a big brother to people down on their luck under any circumstance: “We want to have a safety net. A safety net for the poor, the vulnerable, the people who cannot help themselves.”

Even on deficit reduction, Ryan announced a goal of not bringing the budget into balance for another decade. “I’ll just explain what the speaker said when we passed that bill,” he [said](#) of the House GOP plan. “Our goal is to get cuts and reforms that put us on a path to balancing the budget within a decade.” The Ryan budget introduced last year, “[The Path to Prosperity](#),” would not balance the budget well into the 2030s, so proposing only one additional decade of deficit spending instead of two decades might be considered a sort of progress. But analysts have noted that it is still a long way from balancing the budget within the two-year term his Wisconsin constituents elected him to serve.

Ryan saved most of his [criticism](#) for the Democratic-controlled U.S. Senate, observing, “They haven’t passed a budget in four years, even though there is a law that says we have to budget every year.” He criticized Democrats for not making the most of their control of the executive branch and the U.S. Senate.

Senate Democrats have pledged to pass a budget this year, and on January 20 Senator Charles Schumer of New York [promised](#) on *Meet the Press* that it would include massive tax increases:

You’re gonna need more revenues as well as more cuts to get the deficit down. And I’ve talked to leader Reid, I’ve talked to Budget Chair Murray. We’re gonna to do a budget this year and it’s gonna have revenues in it, and the Republican colleagues better get used to that.

Ryan [revealed](#) his constitutional ignorance on *Meet the Press* in his discussion on the Democratic-



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controlled parts of the federal government. “The President and his party have been in charge of Washington during this time. They have not budgeted for four years,” he declared. Of course, the president has put out a [budget plan](#), and does every year. President Obama’s 2013 budget plan makes no pretense of ever bringing the federal budget into balance.

More importantly, the president and his party are not “in charge” of spending in Washington, and haven’t been since they lost control of the U.S. House of Representatives in the 2010 elections. The Republican-controlled House has an absolute stop on any new spending, which means that the trillion-dollar deficits for the past two years have been [approved by Republicans](#) as well as Democrats. The majority of Republicans in the House could put a stop to deficit spending all by themselves, simply by refusing to pass new deficit spending. But House Republicans — led by Speaker John Boehner and Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan — haven’t even proposed doing this.

Ryan also [predicted](#) in the *Meet the Press* interview that the \$120 billion in automatic cuts as part of last year’s budget deal would take place. “I think the sequester is going to happen,” he told Gregory. The sequester would cut equal amounts from military and non-military discretionary spending increases.



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