



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on November 28, 2012

Sen. Paul: Nation to Get “Big, Ugly” Debt Bag for Christmas

In what might loosely be described as the “spirit of the season,” the Congress of the United States will likely put together a huge grab bag “with a lot of stuff in it,” including tax- and debt-ceiling increases, and drop it down the nation’s chimney before adjourning for its Christmas recess, Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) predicted Monday.



“I think there will be something really big, some enormous, ugly bill with a lot of stuff in it, including raising the debt ceiling by a couple trillion dollars. They’ll squish it into one bill. And sometime before Christmas, they’ll pass it,” Paul said in an [interview](#) with Greta Van Susteren on Fox News Monday night. But they’ll pass it over his opposition, said Paul, a favorite of Tea Party activists and a potential contender for the GOP presidential nomination in 2016.

“I made a pledge to the people of Kentucky that I’m not raising taxes,” said Paul, an ophthalmologist who became Kentucky’s junior senator by winning an open seat in 2010 in his first political campaign. “I took a pledge. I signed a statement, an oath that I wouldn’t raise taxes, and I’m going adhere to it,” he said in apparent reference to the anti-tax pledge promoted by Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. Some key Republicans who took that pledge have indicated on the Sunday talk shows and other venues a willingness to consider tax increases, along with spending cuts, in an effort to avoid the much-discussed “fiscal cliff” of across-the-board spending cuts mandated by the budget agreement of 2011, and the tax increases that will occur without another extension of the Bush-era tax cuts, due to expire on January 1. Norquist responding on CNN’s *Starting Point*, dismissed talk of flexibility by anti-tax Republicans as “discussions of impure thoughts on national television.” Paul made it clear he was entertaining no such thoughts.

“I’m all for reforming the tax code, but it would have to be at the very best revenue-neutral. I don’t want to raise revenue through the taxes,” he said. “The only way I’d raise revenue through taxes is get the economy to grow. You don’t have to raise rates or even close loopholes. The reason we have a lack of revenue in Washington is too much spending and no economic growth,” he told Van Susteren. “If the economy were growing at 4 percent right now, we’d have plenty of revenue.” Raising taxes is not the way to promote economic growth, he said. “That’s what they want to do now, and I think it’s absolutely the wrong thing to do.”

Paul, the son of two-time Republican presidential hopeful Ron Paul, appears ready to continue his father’s decades-long campaign to reduce spending and taxes and oppose programs and actions of the federal government for which there is no constitutional grant of federal power or authority. The elder



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Paul, a 12-term congressman from Texas and the 1988 presidential candidate of the Libertarian Party, is retiring at the end of this year, having chosen not to run for another term in the U.S. House, where he has served, off and on, for more than 24 years over the course of nearly four decades. In the [farewell address](#) he delivered on the House floor on November 14, the 77-year-old retired obstetrician warned of both a political and moral crisis brought on by “the exponential growth of illegal government power.”

The younger Paul has often issued similar warnings about the growth of government and, unlike many of his colleagues in Congress, is not alarmed over the prospect of across-the-board spending cuts, mandated by the sequester provision of the 2011 budget agreement.

“The sequester? Well, I think cutting spending’s a good idea,” he told Van Susteren. “So, I don’t think that’s a bad idea at all, and I don’t think it will lead to economic harm to cut spending. That’s what we should be doing,” Paul blamed the stalemate in efforts to reach an agreement on taxes and spending on what he said is the Democrats’ desire to increase both.

“So you can see why we’re at somewhat of an impasse,” he said. “We have different philosophies about government. I think you should balance budgets, not spend more than comes in, and I think you should lower taxes, not raise taxes.”

Yet Paul often finds himself at odds with fellow Republicans by opposing foreign military interventions and overgrown military budgets, two of his father’s favorite targets. In an interview with [ABC News](#) last week Paul suggested military spending might be an area in which Democrats, who want more money for social programs, and fiscally conservative Republicans can find common ground.

“Republicans who think military spending, myself [included], who think national defense is important, should compromise and say, you know what, not every dollar spent on the military’s sacred, we can reduce the military spending, that’s a compromise. Democrats should compromise also — entitlements and welfare, the spending can come down.” And unlike the many Republicans who are staunch supporters of the war on drugs, Paul believes states such as Washington and Colorado that voted this month to legalize marijuana for adults should be free to do, despite federal law banning the substance.

“States should be allowed to make a lot of these decisions,” Paul said last week. “I want things to be decided more at a local basis, with more compassion. I think it would make us as Republicans different.” He also believes less draconian penalties for marijuana possession and use would help Republicans with younger voters. “I think for example we should tell young people, ‘I’m not in favor of you smoking pot, but if you get caught smoking pot, I don’t want to put you in jail for 20 years,’” said Paul, who also parts company with hardliners on the issue of immigration reform.

While he maintains border security is a top priority, he has also expressed an openness to offering a path to citizenship to people who have been living here illegally for a long time. The image of the Republican Party as hostile to immigrants has hurt the GOP at the polls, he said. “We’re getting an ever dwindling percent of the Hispanic vote,” Paul noted. “We have to let people know, Hispanics in particular, we’re not putting you on a bus and shipping you home.” Paul, 49, is among the Republicans talked about as a potential presidential contender and he is not closing the door on a possible run for the White House in 2016. “I won’t deny that I’m interested in maybe running for president,” he said Monday night. “But it’s way too early to really make a firm commitment on, you know, whether I would or wouldn’t.”



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