



Paul Ryan and House GOP Continue to Push for Spending Increases

The new Paul Ryan-led House of Representatives is no longer able to hide from the truth that the GOP Establishment has concealed from the American people for decades: Republican leaders are at least as addicted to spending and deficits as the Democrats, and have no intention whatsoever of reducing America's runaway debt. Writing for *The Daily Signal*, Tommy Binion [points out](#) the mournful truth that the Republican leadership, including new House Speaker Paul Ryan, is utterly out of touch with the citizens it purports to represent:



Three out of every four Americans say Congress should not increase spending. That's not 73 percent of the Tea Party, or 73 percent of the Republican Party. That's 73 percent of *all* Americans who say Congress should not increase federal spending.

Republicans seem to have missed that message.

Since 2013, the GOP has consistently proposed budgets that increase spending, and not by just a little. Consider that the Republican budget for the 2014 fiscal year, offered by then-Budget Committee Chairman Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., proposed \$966 billion in base spending. This year, Speaker Ryan is pushing a budget that proposes \$1.07 trillion.

That means in four years, Republicans have increased their proposal by \$104 billion.

For decades, Republican leaders, whether in the majority or minority, have blamed deficits, debts, and spending increases on Democratic profligacy, and have defended their own complicity in the mess by invoking the need for compromise. Given the nature of politics, we are incessantly reminded, neither side will ever get everything that it wants; hence the need to accept the best deal one can get.

Compromise is indeed a pragmatic reality of politics. But were the GOP genuinely committed to reducing spending and the debt and cutting government down to something more closely approximating constitutional measurements, we would at least occasionally see compromise of a very different sort than we are accustomed to — especially when, as now, Republicans control both houses of Congress. If Paul Ryan and company were truly the debt-busters and small-government enthusiasts they purport to be, we would see massive, even unrealistic spending cuts and program reductions proposed by Republicans, who would then be forced by Democratic intransigence to accept fewer cuts than they were hoping for. Such compromise would result in the reduction of debts, spending, and the size of government — just not to the degree originally hoped for.

In reality, of course, we have never seen any such thing. "Compromise" as defined on Capitol Hill consists of — at most — imposing miniscule reductions in the rate of government growth and spending increases. These were what the maligned "sequesters" of a few years ago were designed to accomplish,



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and even they have now been discarded. As a result, government — and the debt and spending that sustain it — continues to grow uninterrupted.

All the evidence is in that the American people — and in particular the GOP voter base — is finally starting to catch on. While Paul Ryan enjoyed an undeserved reputation as a fiscal conservative as incoming speaker — polls suggested that 57 percent of all Americans expected him not to increase spending — his record since in office has tarnished his reputation and that of the entire GOP Establishment. Americans were furious when, in office only a few days, Ryan brokered a massive increase in spending (in the name of compromise and getting along, naturally) that left Democrats such as Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid unable to contain their glee or suppress their triumphalism. Of the passage of last December's Omnibus Spending Bill, former Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi chortled that Republicans "gave away the store," adding, "I feel almost jubilant about what is in this appropriations bill."

The popular backlash at Ryan's almost immediate betrayal seems to have left the GOP leadership unfazed, as their gargantuan \$1.07 trillion budget proposal attests. If Binion's article is any evidence, even the reliably neocon Heritage Foundation (which publishes *The Daily Signal*) [is disgusted](#):

For years, they have promised to be the party that reins in the federal debt and deficit, and yet they are proposing a \$50 billion year-to-year increase in their own budget.

House Republicans have lost the forest for the trees.

Frustrated by Democrats and intimidated by a complicit media, the Republican leadership is looking for a way out of the conflict that invariably comes when one tries to exert fiscal discipline. Each budgeting document is seen as an exit ramp away from a public squabble with the Democrats rather than a path forward to responsible budgeting.

Around every budgeting corner, Republican leaders see a false choice between the Democrats' shutdown narrative and an increase in spending. Instead of acting as visionary leaders, Republicans have reduced themselves to the party that incessantly searches for a clever solution to each Democratic trap. The cost is steep; the party of fiscal discipline is now producing budgets full of runaway federal spending.

And many members of the House, in particular the Freedom Caucus, aren't buying it either. [According to Jake Sherman and Lauren French of Politico](#), the proposed budget is a non-starter for Republicans who still believe in cutting government in accordance with their constituents' wishes:

The House Republican budget is in trouble.

Speaker Paul Ryan's Republican leadership team knows it. Most members of the House are acutely aware of it. And most of them even realize how bad it will look. The same party that dreamed up "No Budget, No Pay" to shame Democrats for skipping their fiscal blueprint might now take a pass on its own.

The patient is not totally dead — but it's fair to say the shock plates are firmly planted on its chest. Top Republicans believe the GOP will be able to advance the 2017 budget out of the Budget Committee chaired by Rep. Tom Price (R-Ga.), but whether it will ever be able to make it to the House floor is an open question. Most aides and lawmakers involved in the process doubt it will garner the requisite votes to clear the chamber.

The Freedom Caucus has signaled its unyielding dissatisfaction with this latest piece of GOP



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“compromise.” According to Raul Labrador (R-Idaho), one of the staunchest members of the Freedom Caucus, attempts to work with GOP House leadership on the budget have gone nowhere. “We want to help with the process, we want to have a budget,” Labrador said, “[but] we want to have a budget that complies with what we promised the American people. The budget right now ... does not take into reality how the American people feel.”

With the primary election of yet another Tea Party-supported insurgent, businessman and former Army Ranger Warren Davidson, to the GOP ballot slot vacated by John Boehner, the GOP voting base continues to send a powerful signal of zero tolerance for more politics as usual. Davidson was elected out of a field of 15 GOP candidates that included a couple of state lawmakers, and will in all likelihood go on to win Boehner’s seat against his Democratic opponent in the heavily Republican district.

The voting base, in other words, has finally caught on to the confidence game the GOP has played for decades. The excuses — compromise, fear of a government shutdown, and all the rest — that Republicans have been using for camouflage no longer have the power to awe. And the tectonic event that is the Trump campaign only underscores the fury of the long put-upon grassroots masses.

If Republicans want to have any hope of salvaging their tattered reputation as deficit hawks and champions of smaller government, there’s no time like the present to change their ways.

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