



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 13, 2011

Senator Reid Flip-Flops on Debt Ceiling

The contentious debate over raising the debt ceiling continues to heat up as prominent politicians weigh in on the issue. The latest assertion comes from Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who emphasized to Congress that it must increase the federal debt limit before it's reached. The irony, of course, is that Harry Reid employed a very different stance on the issue just four years ago, under President George W. Bush.



In [2006](#), Senator Harry Reid and then-Senator Barack Obama both voted against increasing the debt limit. At the time, Senator Obama indicated:

Increasing Americas debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means that the buck stops here. Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices onto the backs of our children and grandchildren. American has a debt problem and a failure of leadership.

In agreement with Obama's remarks, Reid voted against raising the debt ceiling.

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White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs has defended Obama's 2006 no vote, contending that it was intended to make a statement and that the increase was not in danger of failing to pass, despite Obama's and Reid's votes.

Not surprisingly, Reid claims to not recall his specific no vote, asserting that he has voted in favor of a debt limit increase 99 percent of the time.

Appearing on NBC's [Meet the Press](#), Reid took a very different position from what he held in 2006, indicating that failure to increase the \$14.3 trillion debt limit is not an option.

Meet the Press host David Gregory reminded Reid of both his and Obama's 2006 votes against raising the debt ceiling. Gregory also reiterated the stance taken by Senator Obama at the time, and then asked Reid,

So which is it? Is raising the debt ceiling a failure of leadership as then-Senator Obama said in 2006, which you agreed with, or is it something we have to do now in order to ward off catastrophe in the economy?

Reid responded,

I agree with the Speaker John Boehner. John Boehner said in November when he was asked a question similar to the one you've asked me, "What are we gonna do about this raising the debt ceiling?" He said, "We have to act as adults." And that's true. We cant back out on the money we owe to the rest of the world. We cannot do as the Gingrich crowd did years ago close the government.

When Gregory questioned Reids seemingly diametric 2006 stance, Reid answered, I don't really know



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what vote you're talking about, Ive cast about 15,000 votes.

[American-Conservativevalues.com](#) contends that Reid's wavering position boils down to which political party occupies the White House.

In the end, Reid declared, In 2006, the debt ceiling was raised. It had to be raised then, and it has to be raised now." He also told Gregory, Im saying today that we have to raise the debt ceiling. There's no alternative.

According to Tea Party Senator Rand Paul, however, there is in fact an [alternative solution](#) to raising the debt limit. Appearing on *Fox News Sunday*, the freshman Senator advised:

What about an in-between solution? What about we spend what we take in? We bring in 200 billion dollars a month. Couldn't we just spend what we have instead of saying oh, we have to shut down the government? They don't tell you there is an alternative.

Of course, Paul's recommendation is merely a short-term solution. The Republican notes that more GOP leaders need to step up to the plate on long-term solutions, including reforms to Social Security, Medicare and a number of other entitlements.

Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner announced this week that the national debt will surpass its current limit sooner than originally anticipated sometime in the early spring forcing the debate on raising the ceiling sooner rather than later.

The [Republican](#) stance on raising the debt ceiling is not unilateral. While some members such as Representative Michelle Bachmann of Minnesota staunchly oppose any raise, others including Representative Eric Cantor have indicated a willingness to increasing the ceiling as long as the increase is accompanied by spending cuts.



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