

Lighthouse in the Fog – The Real Debate!



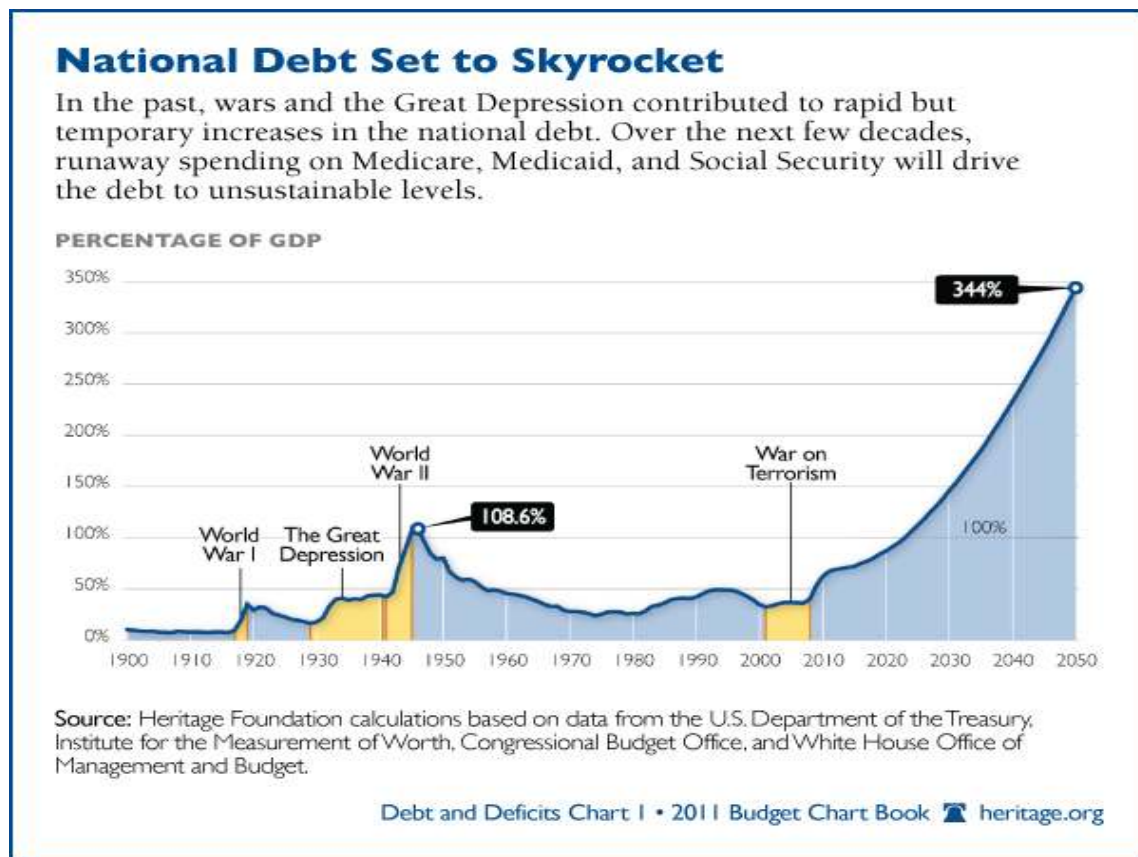
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Lighthouse in the Fog

By: David Hicks – July 15, 2011

The Real Debate!

Somewhere out there are rocks of the shoal that will sink the ship. This is grave danger to a faltering ship. The rocks consist of a debt of 344% of GDP in the very foreseeable future. This simply indicates that our government of fully capable and truly concerned about their constituents representatives (that left a foul taste in my mouth just making fun of it!), will be spending three times what the country produces (**Gross domestic product (GDP)** refers to the market value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a given period. It is often considered an indicator of a country's [standard of living](#)).



The president of the United States, with full knowledge of these events, says:
"I do not want and I will not accept a deal in which I am asked to do nothing. In fact, I'm able to keep hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional income that I don't need, while a parent out there who is struggling to figure out how to send their kid to college suddenly finds that they've got a couple thousand dollars less in grants or student loans." --Barack Obama

Two things should jump out at you in this statement; **first**, that everything you have that is saved, extra, or what you do not need right this moment, belongs to the government. **Second**, is that the leader of this great nation has no real desire to curb the spending.

Note: Mr. President, here is some information concerning school loans and grants from our government; CATO Institute - <http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/education/higher-ed-subsidies>), before you give your money for this; that you should know!

“The Department of Education spends about \$30 billion a year on subsidies for higher education. The bulk of that funding goes toward student aid programs, with the balance going toward grants to educational institutions. In 2008, grants to institutions cost \$2.3 billion and aid programs cost \$27.6 billion, which included \$17.4 billion for student grants, \$9.6 billion for student loans, and \$0.6 billion for administration.¹

Federal student loan and grant programs have been subject to waste and fraud for decades, and have taken many forms. One problem with needs-based student aid, for example, is that it creates incentives for families to misreport their income to garner excess federal cash. With the Pell grant program, this fraud problem costs taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars per year.²¹ Another ongoing problem is the high default rate on student loan programs. In 2001, the Government Accountability Office found that there were about \$22 billion of student loans in **default**.²²

Students aren't the only culprits in education aid abuse. Under most student loan and grant programs, the aid is sent directly to thousands of educational institutions, which are supposed to distribute it to the eligible students. However, that distribution system has attracted swarms of shady school operators, who have lined their own pockets with funds meant for students. A related type of waste that has grabbed news headlines recently regards the large returns earned by the financial institutions that are subsidized to service student loans.

The magnitude of waste and fraud in federal student aid programs became clear in the early 1990s. One scandal at the time regarded the trade school American Career Training Corporation in Florida. The

school recruited new “students” at food stamp offices and housing projects, and helped them take out loans.²³ The school owners received tens of millions of dollars in federally guaranteed student loans, and simply pocketed much of it.”

So, the light from the light house says to you and me; ***“What makes you think that raising taxes is going to stop the debt, when in fact the government has no desire at all to stop spending more than they take in?”***

So, the light from the lighthouse says; ***“What does it matter if the interest on money the nation barrows is raised, if we don’t have to barrow any more money because we learn live within our means?”***

So, the light from the lighthouse asks every American; ***“Why are we not screaming for a balanced budget amendment?”***

The president today, July 15, 2011, in his news conference (that he now appears to think is necessary to chastise his enemies in the debate), that he does not need an amendment that would, force him to do his job, he knows what his job is!!! **REALLY MR. PRESIDENT?** Then why has spending gone up during his administration almost thirty percent over the out of control spending of his predecessor (He really is an elitist, and thinks you and I are truly idiots)???

So, the light from the lighthouse says; ***“Stop having the debate on the turf of the spenders, and demand a balanced budget that only allows that we can spend 75% of projected income (like every business in the nation except the government does)!”***

Look at this list comprised by the Heritage Foundation, and determine in your mind if we really need to give the government more barrowing power:

1. The federal government made at least **\$72 billion** in improper payments in 2008.[\[1\]](#)
2. Washington spends **\$92 billion** on corporate welfare (excluding TARP) versus \$71 billion on homeland security.[\[2\]](#)
3. Washington spends **\$25 billion** annually maintaining unused or vacant federal properties.[\[3\]](#)
4. Government auditors spent the past five years examining all federal programs and found that 22 percent of them -- costing taxpayers a total of **\$123 billion** annually -- fail to show any positive impact on the populations they serve.[\[4\]](#)
5. The Congressional Budget Office published a "Budget Options" series identifying more than **\$100 billion** in potential spending cuts.[\[5\]](#)
6. **Examples from multiple Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports of wasteful duplication include 342 economic development programs; 130 programs serving the disabled; 130 programs serving at-risk youth; 90 early**

- childhood development programs; 75 programs funding international education, cultural, and training exchange activities; and 72 safe water programs.**[\[6\]](#)
7. Washington will spend **\$2.6 million** training Chinese prostitutes to drink more responsibly on the job.[\[7\]](#)
 8. **A GAO audit classified nearly half of all purchases on government credit cards as improper, fraudulent, or embezzled. Examples of taxpayer-funded purchases include gambling, mortgage payments, liquor, lingerie, iPods, Xboxes, jewelry, Internet dating services, and Hawaiian vacations. In one extraordinary example, the Postal Service spent \$13,500 on one dinner at a Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, including "over 200 appetizers and over \$3,000 of alcohol, including more than 40 bottles of wine costing more than \$50 each and brand-name liquor such as Courvoisier, Belvedere and Johnny Walker Gold." The 81 guests consumed an average of \$167 worth of food and drink apiece.**[\[8\]](#)
 9. Federal agencies are delinquent on nearly 20 percent of employee travel charge cards, costing taxpayers **hundreds of millions of dollars** annually.[\[9\]](#)
 10. The Securities and Exchange Commission spent **\$3.9 million** rearranging desks and offices at its Washington, D.C., headquarters.[\[10\]](#)
 11. The Pentagon recently spent **\$998,798** shipping two 19-cent washers from South Carolina to Texas and **\$293,451** sending an 89-cent washer from South Carolina to Florida.[\[11\]](#)
 12. **Over half of all farm subsidies** go to commercial farms, which report average household incomes of \$200,000.[\[12\]](#)
 13. Health care fraud is estimated to cost taxpayers more than **\$60 billion** annually.[\[13\]](#)
 14. A GAO audit found that 95 Pentagon weapons systems suffered from a combined **\$295 billion** in cost overruns.[\[14\]](#)
 15. The refusal of many federal employees to fly coach costs taxpayers **\$146 million** annually in flight upgrades.[\[15\]](#)
 16. Washington will spend **\$126 million** in 2009 to enhance the Kennedy family legacy in Massachusetts. Additionally, Senator John Kerry (D-MA) diverted \$20 million from the 2010 defense budget to subsidize a new Edward M. Kennedy Institute.[\[16\]](#)
 17. Federal investigators have launched more than **20 criminal fraud investigations** related to the TARP financial bailout.[\[17\]](#)
 18. Despite trillion-dollar deficits, last year's 10,160 earmarks included **\$200,000** for a tattoo removal program in Mission Hills, California; **\$190,000** for the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming; and **\$75,000** for the Totally Teen Zone in Albany, Georgia.[\[18\]](#)
 19. **The federal government owns more than 50,000 vacant homes.**[\[19\]](#)
 20. The Federal Communications Commission spent **\$350,000** to sponsor NASCAR driver David Gilliland.[\[20\]](#)
 21. **Members of Congress have spent hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars supplying their offices with popcorn machines, plasma televisions, DVD equipment, ionic air fresheners, camcorders, and signature machines -- plus**

- \$24,730 leasing a Lexus, \$1,434 on a digital camera, and \$84,000 on personalized calendars.**[\[21\]](#)
22. More than **\$13 billion** in Iraq aid has been classified as wasted or stolen. Another **\$7.8 billion** cannot be accounted for.[\[22\]](#)
 23. Fraud related to Hurricane Katrina spending is estimated to top **\$2 billion**. In addition, debit cards provided to hurricane victims were used to pay for Caribbean vacations, NFL tickets, Dom Perignon champagne, "Girls Gone Wild" videos, and at least one sex change operation.[\[23\]](#)
 24. **Auditors discovered that 900,000 of the 2.5 million recipients of emergency Katrina assistance provided false names, addresses, or Social Security numbers or submitted multiple applications.**[\[24\]](#)
 25. Congress recently gave Alaska Airlines **\$500,000** to paint a Chinook salmon on a Boeing 737.[\[25\]](#)
 26. The Transportation Department will subsidize up to **\$2,000 per flight** for direct flights between Washington, D.C., and the small hometown of Congressman **Hal Rogers** (R-KY) -- but only on Monday mornings and Friday evenings, when lawmakers, staff, and lobbyists usually fly. Rogers is a member of the Appropriations Committee, which writes the Transportation Department's budget.[\[26\]](#)
 27. Washington has spent **\$3 billion** re-sanding beaches -- even as this new sand washes back into the ocean.[\[27\]](#)
 28. A Department of Agriculture report concedes that much of the **\$2.5 billion** in "stimulus" funding for broadband Internet will be wasted.[\[28\]](#)
 29. The Defense Department wasted **\$100 million** on unused flight tickets and never bothered to collect refunds even though the tickets were refundable.[\[29\]](#)
 30. Washington spends **\$60,000 per hour** shooting Air Force One photo-ops in front of national landmarks.[\[30\]](#)
 31. Over one recent 18-month period, Air Force and Navy personnel used government-funded credit cards to charge at least **\$102,400** on admission to entertainment events, **\$48,250** on gambling, **\$69,300** on cruises, and **\$73,950** on exotic dance clubs and prostitutes.[\[31\]](#)
 32. Members of Congress are set to pay themselves **\$90 million** to increase their franked mailings for the 2010 election year.[\[32\]](#)
 33. Congress has ignored efficiency recommendations from the Department of Health and Human Services that would save **\$9 billion** annually.[\[33\]](#)
 34. Taxpayers are funding paintings of high-ranking government officials at a cost of up to **\$50,000 apiece.**[\[34\]](#)
 35. The state of Washington sent \$1 food stamp checks to 250,000 households in order to raise state caseload figures and trigger **\$43 million** in additional federal funds.[\[35\]](#)
 36. Suburban families are receiving large **farm subsidies for the grass in their backyards** -- subsidies that many of these families never requested and do not want. [\[36\]](#)
 37. Congress appropriated **\$20 million** for "commemoration of success" celebrations related to Iraq and Afghanistan.[\[37\]](#)

38. Homeland Security employee purchases include 63-inch plasma TVs, iPods, and **\$230** for a beer brewing kit.[\[38\]](#)
39. Two drafting errors in the 2005 Deficit Reduction Act resulted in a **\$2 billion** taxpayer cost.[\[39\]](#)
40. North Ridgeville, Ohio, received **\$800,000** in "stimulus" funds for a project that its mayor described as "a long way from the top priority."[\[40\]](#)
41. The National Institutes of Health spends **\$1.3 million** per month to rent a lab that it cannot use.[\[41\]](#)
42. Congress recently spent **\$2.4 billion** on 10 new jets that the Pentagon insists it does not need and will not use.[\[42\]](#)
43. Lawmakers diverted **\$13 million** from Hurricane Katrina relief spending to build a museum celebrating the Army Corps of Engineers -- the agency partially responsible for the failed levees that flooded New Orleans.[\[43\]](#)
44. Medicare officials recently mailed **\$50 million** in erroneous refunds to 230,000 Medicare recipients.[\[44\]](#)
45. Audits showed **\$34 billion** worth of Department of Homeland Security contracts contained significant waste, fraud, and abuse.[\[45\]](#)
46. Washington recently spent **\$1.8 million** to help build a private golf course in Atlanta, Georgia.[\[46\]](#)
47. The Advanced Technology Program spends **\$150 million** annually subsidizing private businesses; 40 percent of this funding goes to Fortune 500 companies.[\[47\]](#)
48. Congressional investigators were able to receive **\$55,000** in federal student loan funding for a fictional college they created to test the Department of Education.[\[48\]](#)
49. The Conservation Reserve program pays farmers **\$2 billion** annually not to farm their land.[\[49\]](#)
50. The Commerce Department has **lost 1,137 computers** since 2001, many containing Americans' personal data.[\[50\]](#)

So, the light from the lighthouse says, ***“Re-read the entire list and ask yourself after you pick yourself off the floor, is this debt debate really about Social Security or Medicare?”***

I wonder if the president of the United States and the entire legislative branch of the United States would be paid, only, if they balanced the budget (real numbers, not fictitious), proved that they cut waste, if this perhaps might change the outlook of these leaders and those of us who put them into office?

2 Thessalonians 3:10 ***“For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.”***

The lighthouse is aware that many who have been created in entitlements are concerned about their fixed retired incomes, and health care costs; however, if the government were handcuffed in spending, and forced to treat the American tax dollar as if it was their own, and stop sending American tax dollars to foreign nations, then the solvency of certain entitlements for our seniors and better benefits for our military would be a given and very affordable.

So, the light from the lighthouse says; ***“Do not allow YOUR government to have access to more of YOUR money, until these conditions are met!!!”***

Watch the Rocks!



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