

Last week, the House of Representatives did something the Senate has been unable to do in nearly three years – pass a budget. In fact, this is the second time in two years that the House has mustered the votes to approve a responsible plan to cut federal spending and put our government on a path to a balanced budget.

Admittedly, the topic of federal budgeting is a pretty dry subject. Judging from the news last week, many Americans would rather contemplate what they would do with the winning ticket in the record-breaking \$640 million Mega Millions lottery than take the time to consider the impact of their congressman's vote for the 2013 federal budget.

The odds-makers tell us that the chances of any one individual striking it rich in the lottery are much less than being struck by lightning multiple times. Yet, it's a sure bet that Congress's work on the new federal budget will affect you and every other American in some way.

I don't have to tell you that our government's financial picture is bleak. Years of overspending by Washington have led us into so much debt that no amount of record-breaking lottery jackpots could put a dent in it (and don't forget that the government collects taxes on lottery winners).

The national debt is now over \$15.5 trillion and growing. It's also a bipartisan debt. Both political parties have contributed to the sea of red ink in which we are now adrift. However, what is most alarming about the nation's debt is the recent surge in borrowing and spending since President Obama took office in 2009. He has managed to not only increase the total national debt by a third in less than four years, but he has set in motion a trend to effectively double it from the 2009 level in a mere four more years.

For those who say this characterization of Mr. Obama's record spending is not a fair portrayal, I would refer them to a March 19, 2012 CBS News report. To quote the story's lead, "The National Debt has now increased more during President Obama's three years and two months in office than it did during 8 years of the George W. Bush presidency."

The president's new 2013 budget proposal overspends to the tune of \$1.5 trillion, this despite the addition of \$1.9 trillion in tax increases. Not surprisingly, when the House had an

opportunity to vote on the Obama budget last week it soundly defeated it. In fact, the vote was a resounding 414 to 0, without a single member of the president's own party supporting it.

In contrast, the House passed its own conservative budget last week authored by Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan. Rep. Ryan's "Path to Prosperity" budget blueprint takes the country in a different direction. It cuts spending by \$5 trillion and reduces the deficit by \$3 trillion over ten years compared to President Obama's budget.

The House Republican budget also prevents President Obama's tax increases and would repeal his controversial and arguably unconstitutional health care law. It also takes the bold step of reforming the broken tax code to make it simple, fair and competitive.

I support Mr. Ryan's budget just as I supported his similar conservative budget last year. His 2012 budget passed the House but was never allowed for an up or down vote in the Senate.

To be sure, the Senate will again block the House Republican budget this year, ignoring the urgency of addressing the nation's debt crisis. In fact, the Senate hasn't even passed a budget of its own in more than 1000 days. I personally raised this point with Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner during a congressional hearing last week. I asked him why the President is critical of the House for doing its job on time and yet he is silent when Senate Democrats fail to even offer a budget.

To learn more about the House-passed "Path to Prosperity" budget, you can view a video from Chairman Paul Ryan posted on my web site: <http://bonner.house.gov>.

Alabama Unemployment Drops Slightly:

Alabama's jobless rate continued to inch down last month, dropping 0.2 percent to 7.6 percent overall in February.

Each of the six counties of the First Congressional District also saw a slight decrease in unemployment from the January levels, generally a 0.3 percent drop. While these figures are moving in the right direction, they are still far too high. We all acknowledge that more work must be done to restore employment opportunities across our region.

Last Friday, I was honored to participate in the grand opening of a new steel processing plant in our area. SET Enterprises will bring 30 good-paying jobs to Jackson.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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