

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

November 15, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

It is time. As I have expressed before in writing to you and members of your administration, I am very interested in working with you in a bipartisan manner to implement long-term solutions to America's debt problems. Our impending debt crises and threats to the solvency of Social Security and Medicare must be solved now before they reach catastrophic levels. I urge you to work with Congress to achieve a long term solution. As such, I would like to take you up on your public offer to discuss ideas and implement solutions that will no longer force us to govern through crises, cliffs or shutdown deadlines.

On October 16, 2013, you stated you are "Willing to work with anybody... Democrat or Republican, House or Senate members on any idea that will grow our economy, create new jobs, strengthen the middle class, and get our fiscal house in order for the long term."

To that end, I submit the following honest proposal which I truly believe will take a small but significant step forward toward more responsible governance. Also, I hope it might change the culture of Washington, DC to an environment where good policy triumphs over politics.

As you can see, the honest proposal is a multi-step vision and plan summarized as follows:

Step 1. Raise the February 7, 2014 debt ceiling limit in an amount equal to the total CBO score of spending reductions, reforms and removal of waste, fraud and abuse within government operations that have been already identified and generally supported on a bipartisan basis. Attached please find a list of \$573 billion of such government reforms and spending reductions already identified to date.

Step 2a. Upon completion of step 1, proceed on debate in both the House and Senate on comprehensive tax reform with the goal of reforming the code to promote fairness and economic growth. A vote in each respective body must take place on the tax reform packages produced by that body in order for Step 2c to take effect.

Step 2b. Upon completion of step 1, proceed in both the House and Senate on reforms to strengthen and preserve Social Security and Medicare for the future. A vote in each respective body must take place on the Social Security and Medicare reforms produced by that body in order for Step 2c to take effect.

Step 2c. The debt ceiling will be automatically extended for an additional year beyond the time set forth in Step 1 if the respective votes have occurred in Congress as identified above.

Step 3. If either tax reform or reforms to Social Security and Medicare is signed into law within the expiration of the additional one year period in step 2c, the debt ceiling limit will be automatically raised for an additional two years thereafter. This would mean the debt ceiling restraint would no longer impact your administration as it would be automatically extended beyond the end of your administration's term.

I kindly request you review this proposal and then meet to discuss how it can be improved and implemented. To me, this is an honest proposal which will put Americans first and begin to address the pressing issues of our day. We have major debt issues that cannot wait any longer. Our arcane tax code stifles economic growth and the fiscal health of Social Security and Medicare is worsening beyond control. If we solve these two challenges, we will place our children and grandchildren and our nation's finances in far better positions than where they are now projected to be. To me this adheres to a fundamental rule that we pass America on to our next generation in a better condition than which we found her.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and working with you to prevent the dire consequences of failing to address these challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Reed', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tom Reed
Member of Congress