



Deficit 'compromise' just a drop in the bucket

So, at nearly the final hour, Congress and the president reach agreement on a budget compromise that will save the economy.

We are not yet out of the woods.

The agreement calls for cuts of \$2.5 trillion, which sounds like a lot of money, but that's not enough to balance the budget. It will take real structural change to do that.

The deal is a start, but only a start. The first billion or so is the low-hanging fruit. It comes from capping all spending except the so-called entitlements - Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, government pensions - at 2012 levels.

That is not a spending cut, in other words; it's just limiting the formerly unchecked growth in the budget.

In fact, \$2.5 trillion in cuts over 10 years averages out to just \$250 billion per year, while the country faces a projected deficit just this year of \$1.645 trillion. The government is borrowing 40 percent of what it will spend this year, and \$250 billion won't begin to change that.

It's pretty easy to see, we've got a long way to go until we can balance the budget. Congress and the White House will have to find some way to cut another \$1.4 trillion a year.

Part of that is projected to come from growth in the economy, but in the present situation, that's not happening. The government projects the deficit to drop by more than half, to \$650 billion a year, by 2016. That's only a guess, however; spending has been well above growth for years.

A bipartisan committee is to be appointed to craft another \$1.2 trillion in cuts over the next 10 years, to be voted on by fall. But that's just another drop in the bucket, maybe \$120 billion a year.

Still, it's a start. We owe the "Tea Party" people a favor: they went to the brink to show the country how important solving this problem is. Until they did, and it's not been a pleasant experience, neither party paid more than lip service to deficit reduction.

With government spending, everyone wants some, but no one wants to pay. Republicans stand against any tax increase, while Democrats say, simplistically, "tax the rich." Yet one esti-

mate is that the assets of all American billionaires amount to a little more than \$1.3 trillion. We could take everything they had, and still have a \$350 billion deficit this year.

Any approach that includes tax increases will have to include us all. Relying on growth in the economy might work for a while - until the next recession, at least - but eventually, that, too, will fail.

Cuts will have to be deeper, much deeper. What has to happen?

• Most of the budget is tied up in "entitlement" social programs that are dear to Democrats. We will have to let go, not of the programs, but of the way they are planned to grow and grow. That means caps on spending and cuts in the formulas for automatic increases.

But as we've seen the last couple of years, increases in Social Security and other programs have become an "entitlement" in themselves. Supporters cry that retirees "need" this money. But to cap borrowing, we'll have to face reality.

• Tax reform. Sometimes a euphemism for a tax increase, this means rewriting the tax code to make it less complex. But will people let go of favorite deductions, such as the home-mortgage write-off? Will accounts and tax lawyers block simplification?

• Real cuts, across the board, in programs from defense to farm subsidies. Those who depend on federal spending - and today, who doesn't - will have to suffer. But just as your family has to cut back when bills grow and income shrinks, we'll all have to take a piece of the pain.

None of this is going to be easy. We may have to go to the brink again. But the compromise shows the system, slow and cranky as it is, still works. All sides will have to keep the pressure on to move us toward a sane and rational budget, a less complex and more fair tax policy and - some day, down the road, after the next recession - a chance to reduce the burdensome debt that put us in this hole.

The country will have to take it one step at a time, but this is a - very small - first step. A great deal more effort - and a lot more pain - will be required.

- Steve Haynes



Reader responds to earlier letter

Letter to the Editor,

In response to Chuck Kribs letter in the July 14 issue about the debt ceiling and the deficit. When he is referring to the Federal Public Sector is he also including the senators and representatives or only federal employees? I believe since our country is in such dire straits, that congress should have to pay for their health care and pension. The taxpayer should not be forced to pay for these luxuries for them. Maybe the pay of congress should be cut in half after all they are public servants and should be working for us and not the big corporations.

Why does Mr. Kribs want to

Letters to the Editor

sink the boats of hard working federal employees? Maybe he should be working to raise the boats of the working middle class by helping them receive good pay and benefits. First people are told to work hard and pull themselves up by the boot straps. Then when a person gets a good paying federal job, they are told they are a bad person for having a good paying job. You are also called a lazy person if you are unemployed because your job has been shipped overseas and there are no jobs to be found where you reside. Where are the

JOBS the Republicans promised when they ran for office last fall???

As to Mr. Kribs recommending kicking out the illegals, I really don't believe that would improve the job market. Most Americans won't do the jobs that the Mexicans do. Because of the strict immigration law passed by the state of Georgia, most Mexicans left the state and now the crops are rotting, since the farmer can't find anyone to pick them.

Diana Brunswig-Bosso
Arnold, Mo.

People urged to help with relay

Letter to the Editor:

Once again, the Cheyenne County Relay for Life is over and basically only the paperwork remains. Even the numbers being down, due to harvest, hot weather, and whatever else occurs, the excitement was still contagious.

Cancer is such a mysterious and rampant disease and not nearly enough answers are being found. Research is expensive and is partially funded by events such as relay. Relay can only be successful by cooperation of communities and individuals.

It is easy to set back and say: "I don't have time," "There is nothing I can really do," "Someone else can do a better job," "This really doesn't affect me." These statements are all wrong.

We can all make time in our lives for what is important. There are always things that even the smallest and least talented can do. And unfortunately, cancer affects

us all. Most of us live our daily lives being touched by individuals who have battled, who are battling, or who have lost their battle to this dreaded disease.

We are truly blessed to live in such a loving and caring community. There are always people who are there for us when we need them.

The 2011 Relay for Life Committee once again worked together and had another successful relay. I am now going to challenge the community to help us begin working toward an even better 2012 relay.

It is not too early to put together teams for next year and begin fundraisers for your team. Don't wait for someone to ask you, step forward and ask what you can do. Don't set back and say, "They should have done this. Come forward and help us do it!"

Help us in this fight to help find a cure for this disease. We need to all work together.

Please contact me at (785) 332-5348 and let us help you get started.

Pat Rose, Chairman
2011 Cheyenne County
Relay for Life Committee

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Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



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By Casey McCormick
"And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed." Genesis 2:8.

Lucas is located about 16 miles north of I-70, between Hays and Salina. It is a sleepy little town of about 450 folks. What a surprising place to find S.P. Dinsmoor's vision of heaven and earth.

For years I have driven along that stretch of highway and seen the signs directing the curious to "The Garden of Eden." A Bucholtz family camping trip to Lake Wilson gave me the excuse needed to visit Lucas and this unique spectacle.

Dinsmoor was a Civil War vet, present when Robert E. Lee surrendered, who after the war ended up in north-central Kansas. With the help of four men, he brought native limestone from a nearby quarry to build his "stone log cabin." But he didn't stop there.

Concrete became the medium that he used to create elaborate shapes and figures to tell stories. Thus came about his Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve stand before a grape arbor as other biblical figures help tell stories from

the book of Genesis. Dinsmoor, a Populist politician, also had some strong opinions about big government and big business. Some of his sculptures make statements of what he thought about the direction America was going during the early part of the 20th Century.

Having a bit of P.T. Barnum in him, Dinsmoor wanted to make sure people would get off the beaten path and visit his Garden of Eden. Perhaps part of that is done by visitors stopping to see the old man himself. A tour of the site ends with viewing him through a piece of Plexiglas as he lies at rest in his mausoleum in the backyard of the stone log

cabin property.

Dinsmoor's Garden of Eden was recently taken over by the Kohler Foundation, the plumbing fixture company, which focuses on the preservation of outdoor art exhibits. After restoration of the sculptures and property has been completed, it will be given to the Friends of S.P. Dinsmoor group in Lucas. This should insure that many more of the curious will take the turnoff on K-232 to see the old man's vision of the here and the here-after.

GOD SAYS
The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable; but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.
Psalms 10:32

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