



BUDGET COMMITTEE



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Senator Gregg's Floor Statement on Pay-Go

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(Excerpts; Unofficial transcript)

There are [several] issues very significant to the American taxpayer, especially to those of us concerned about how much debt this Administration is running up on our children.

This Administration in recent days has been giving at least lip service to the fact that the budget that they put in place -- a \$1 trillion deficit over the next ten years on average every year, \$1 trillion every year for the next ten years, doubling the debt in five years, tripling it in ten years. They have been giving lip service that they understand this is not a tenable situation. They have said that the budget they propose is not sustainable because the debt that's being run up on the American public cannot be afforded by our children.

It goes from what has historically been 36% of gross domestic product up to 82% of gross domestic product. The interest on the debt alone at the end of this budget will be \$800 billion, just in interest payments. That's what the American people have to pay. That will actually exceed any other major item of discretionary spending in the budget. We'll be spending more on interest, in other words, than on national defense because of the debt being run up.

It's unfair to run up \$1 trillion a year of deficit, double the debt in five years and triple it in 10 years and send all of those bills to our kids. These young students who are here today as Senate pages in 10 years will find that the household that they're living in has a new \$130,000 mortgage build-on. It's called the bill of the federal debt. They'll have a new \$6,500 interest payment that they will have to make. That is the interest they will have to support on the debt.

Why am I suspicious that this Administration is giving us lip service on the fiscal issue and the issue of the debt?

It is [something] that happened today that raises that suspicion, which is the fact that the President today came out and held a big press conference about how he was for Pay-Go. I have not heard a Democratic candidate for Congress, and now the President of the United States, not claim that they're going to exercise fiscal discipline around here by being for Pay-Go -- it has motherhood implications that you're going to pay for what you do around here.

Well, it's total hypocrisy. It is inconsistent with everything that's happened from the other side of the aisle. Not only do they not support Pay-Go, they punch holes in what we presently have for our Pay-Go rules. In the last 2 1/2 years this Congress and now in the last three months, four months, five months, this President and this Democratic-controlled Congress has passed 8 bills which have waived or gamed the Pay-Go rules that are already on the books to the tune of \$883 billion. And if you count the things they wanted to do that they weren't able to pass because we on our side of the aisle said, 'no, that's too much' -- we did it on the rest too; we just got rolled, there are more than \$1 trillion of instances where this Congress and this President have asked for initiatives that would waive, punch holes in, go around the Pay-Go rules which we already have. That's why I called it Swiss Cheese-Go, not Pay-Go.

And now we have this disingenuous statement from the Administration that suddenly they're for Pay-Go. Pay-Go exists; we just don't enforce it around here. Not only do they claim they're for Pay-Go, but even in their statement they claim their own Pay-Go proposal won't apply to the AMT fix and it is not going to apply as it historically should apply to the doc fix exercise. There should be a Pay-Go order against the first five years and they waived that against health care reform.

So it's a good press event. It will be picked up by the mainstream media as "An Effort by This Administration to Try to Discipline Spending." Because, of course, they're not going to acknowledge the fact that it has been gamed to such an extraordinary extent that over \$883 billion has been spent that should have been subject to Pay-Go rules.

And, so, it really is a touch inconsistent and disingenuous for them to suddenly now find the faith of Pay-Go when, in fact, they've been ignoring the Pay-Go rules and gaming the Pay-Go rules so that they could spend money and, again, what happens there? Run up the debt of the United States. Run up the debt on the American people. Create a system where our government will not be sustainable or affordable for our children.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.