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CONTACT: Brad Dayspring
(202) 226-8582

RSC Offers Constitutional Amendment to Control Wasteful Washington Spending

WASHINGTON, DC – Members of the fiscally responsible Republican Study Committee (RSC) today offered a constitutional amendment designed to control wasteful Washington spending. RSC Chairman Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), and RSC Members John Campbell (R-CA), Paul Ryan (R-WI), Mike Pence (R-IN), Scott Garrett (R-NJ), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), Marilyn Musgrave (R-CO), Doug Lamborn (R-CO), Tom Price (R-GA), Tom Feeney (R-FL) and Michele Bachmann (R-MN) took part in the tax day press conference on Capitol Hill to announce the historic amendment.

As millions of Americans filed their tax returns on Tuesday, RSC Members proposed the amendment aimed at restraining federal spending as part of its Taxpayer Bill of Rights initiative. The projected growth of federal spending is unsustainable and threatens the standard of living for the next generation of American families. By 2040, taxes would need to double in order to pay for the compounded spending if the federal budget is left on automatic pilot—and that’s assuming no more additional spending is created.

Just as every family in America must make difficult choices in developing a secure family budget, the amendment introduced by the RSC forces the government to establish a reasonable limit to the growth of federal spending. In essence, the spending limit amendment would prohibit federal spending from growing faster than the economy (nominal GDP). Though it could be suspended if a declaration of war is in effect, or by a two-third vote of Congress, the amendment is meant to provide real restraint and encompasses all federal spending.

RSC Member Statements

RSC Chairman Jeb Hensarling:

“At a time when American families are facing spiraling energy and food costs, uncertainty in the housing market, and are being threatened by Democrats with the largest tax increase in American history, Republicans are here to say ‘enough is enough.’ The federal budget **must not** continue to grow faster than American families’ ability to pay for it.

“If families in America can tighten their belts, so too can bureaucrats in Washington. No more wasteful or hidden earmarks, no more runaway entitlement spending, no more mortgaging our children’s future. Some in Washington who want to take more from your paycheck so some Congressman can keep his, and it has to stop.

“The amendment that the RSC introduced today will bring long overdue fiscal accountability to Washington and force Congress to come with innovative new ways of accomplishing more with less. Democrats look at our \$9 trillion debt and think it is time to raise taxes on hard-working Americans. They are wrong. America doesn’t rack up debt because Washington taxes too little; we have a \$9 trillion debt because Washington spends too much. Contrary to the beliefs of Senator Obama, Senator Clinton, and Speaker Pelosi, government is not the generator of economic growth; hardworking American families are and it’s time for Congress to start providing solutions that address their concerns.

RSC Spending and Taskforce Chairman John Campbell (R-CA):

“Clearly, we have a systemic, bipartisan overspending problem,” said Rep. Campbell. “43 out of the last 48 years, federal government spending has exceeded federal government revenues. We need an external discipline to force Congress to do what we all know is the right thing – stop increasing spending faster than the ability of economic growth to pay for it.”

Congressman Paul Ryan (R-WI), Ranking Member, House Budget Committee:

“Those I represent in Wisconsin are painfully aware that prices for nearly everything – from groceries to gas – are on the rise. To add further tax increases is a fundamentally flawed policy, yet the Democrat’s recent budget resolution would do just that. They have chosen a path that would raise taxes on the average Wisconsinite by \$2,965. We simply cannot afford the vicious cycle of ever-higher spending chased by ever-higher taxes.

“Congress is failing in its responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayers’ hard-earned money. The American people deserve better from their leaders, and I am optimistic that we can rise to meet the fiscal challenges before us. We must seize this opportunity to provide tax relief for American families and workers, and restore the retirement security and health safety net for our nation’s most vulnerable.

Congressman Marilyn Musgrave (R-CO):

“This amendment represents a promise to the American people – that we will not place the burden of bigger government on their shoulders. At a time when middle class families are being squeezed by falling home values, rising gas prices and a slowing economy, we must act in good faith and restore their trust in a system of government that works for them, not vice versa.”

Congressman Jeff Flake (R-AZ):

“Unfortunately, Congress has no self-discipline when it comes to spending. Amending the constitution isn’t always desirable but, in this case, it’s clearly necessary.”

Congressman Scott Garrett (R-NJ):

“It’s time that the overspending in Washington comes to an end. Our nation’s hardworking taxpayers should not have to bear the burden for the gross misuse of government funds. This year we witnessed the Democrats passage of a \$683 billion tax increase to pay for their out-of-control spending habits. America’s middle class and small businesses should not be the ones taking the financial hit. When is Washington going to grow up and take responsibility for its actions? When you don’t have money to spend, stop spending; don’t steal from the pockets of our nation’s families!”

Congressman Michele Bachmann (R-MN):

“Every year, Washington spending seems to grow more wasteful and extravagant – and America’s families carry that load on their backs. The spending limit amendment we are introducing today would hold the line against wasteful Washington spending, and ensure that the growth in spending should never exceed the growth of our economy. We have a responsibility to our children and our children’s children to preserve our unique way of life and our blessed liberties. This amendment would be a historic leap in the right direction.”

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*Congressman Jeb Hensarling is Chairman of the Republican Study Committee (RSC).
For additional information about the RSC’s pro-taxpayer agenda, please visit
www.house.gov/hensarling/rsc*