

Republicans On Paying Our Nation's Bills: They Were For It Before They Were Against It

Over the past six months, Republicans have held our economy hostage by suggesting America may not pay its bills. But before they were against it, Republicans strongly supported action to ensure we pay our nation's bills:

House Speaker John Boehner: “We’re going to have to deal with [the debt limit] as adults... Whether we like it or not, the federal government has obligations and we have obligations on our part.” [[Wall Street Journal, 11/18/10](#)]

Representative Mike Pence (R-IN): “I rise today as a conservative Member of this institution, Mr. Speaker. I did not come here to increase the government's debt. I came here believing, as so many people I represent believe, that if you owe debts, pay debts. I spoke to an elderly woman on a radio program in Richmond, Indiana, today in the heart of the heartland district that I represent. Mr. Speaker, she said with fear in her voice that she was worried that a conservative like me would not support raising the debt ceiling and would put at risk her Social Security check. She assumed that my loathing of red ink would cause me to vote in such a way or fail to act in such a way that it would jeopardize her benefits and the benefits of people that she loves. Well, I assured her then and I rise today to assure all of those that are listening, Mr. Speaker, that I will not do that. I truly believe if you owe debts, pay debts.” [[House Floor, 06/27/02](#)]

Representative David Dreier (R-CA): “Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this rule. It is the fiscally responsible policy for us to increase by \$800 billion the national debt limit. One might say, how can that be fiscally responsible for us to all of the sudden increase that burden which has the potential to increase interest rates and do all of these other things that obviously we bemoan increases in spending. Well, the reason it is the fiscally responsible thing for us to do is that if we do not, there are tremendous obligations that the Federal Government has that could potentially be jeopardized. Not that they will be jeopardized or not, but potentially be jeopardized... If we do not take this action now as expeditiously as possible, get this done, we will increase the already-high interest costs that the American taxpayer will be shouldering... I will say that clearly increasing the debt ceiling is something that it is easy to cast a ‘no’ vote on it, but it is not the responsible thing to do...” [[House Floor, 11/18/04](#)]

Representative Kevin Brady (R-TX): “At this extraordinary time, with our Nation's many obligations, the government is nearing the debt limit... Tonight's measure is an appropriate time to discuss spending and deficits and solutions, but as we debate this and as we make our final vote, let us not punish our seniors, let us not punish our elderly, let us not punish our military just to score political points. If the debt ceiling is not increased, America cannot pay its bills. We cannot meet existing obligations. We will not ultimately have the cash on hand to pay Social Security benefits, military retirement, Medicare benefits, unemployment benefits and other trust fund obligations.” [[House Floor, 11/18/04](#)]

Representative Jeff Flake (R-AZ): “Now, how can somebody spend like a drunken sailor and then all of a sudden find religion when it comes to raising the debt limit? This is just like eating a big meal and walking out on the bill. There are only a few people in this House who could in good conscience vote against this bill, and they have spoken. And to see this display of people standing up and saying, we cannot raise the debt limit, that is not responsible, after voting to spend and spend and spend, it is just more than I could take. So I had to come here and talk about it.” [[House Floor, 06/27/02](#)]

House Republicans haven't listened to economists, Wall Street executives and business leaders, will they listen to themselves? It's time for Republicans to stop risking our economic security and work with Democrats to agree on a balanced approach to reduce the deficit that includes revenues and spending cuts.

Office of Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer, 07/05/11