

October marks the beginning of the new fiscal year for the federal government, and I am sorry to say that our national budget is beset by the same problems that plagued the year which came before it.

FY 2012 saw the federal government spend \$3.8 trillion, rack up \$1.1 trillion in deficit spending, and add it to a \$16 trillion national debt.

Next year, the Congressional Budget Office acknowledges that the U.S. will again likely surpass the \$1 trillion mark in deficit spending, even using a set of assumptions that count upon remarkable improvement in the U.S. and global economy. FY 2013 could be the fifth year in a row in which the U.S. exceeds a trillion in new debt.

Many factors can be blamed for this sad state of fiscal affairs: The economic problems plaguing the country. Uncertain federal regulatory and tax policy. \$1.5 trillion in stimulus spending. A \$2 trillion health care law. And a lack of foresight from policymakers who refuse to budget at all costs.

I authored a billion-dollar cut to the Internal Revenue Service, significant reductions at the General Services Administration and the U.S. Treasury, and elimination of several unneeded federal programs. But these cuts were rejected in favor of a plan to kick the can down the road, allowing excessive spending at dozens of bureaucracies to continue unchecked.

I'm shocked by the support in Congress for an across-the-board spending increase for the first six months of FY 2013. I voted no, but I was in a small minority of conservatives who rejected the point-six-percent increase in the federal budget.

These are the problems, but instead of pointing the finger at them, we need to try to solve them. We must get serious about commonsense cuts to the size and scope of the federal government – in the short term as well as in the long term.

We must also demand accountability from politicians who promise deficit reduction. It surprises no one that then-candidate Barack Obama promised to cut federal budget deficits in half by the end of his first term in office. At the time, that figure came to \$455 billion. Today, four years later, we have added \$4.5 trillion to the national debt through deficit spending. At no point was the federal deficit less than TWO TIMES the amount of FY 2008. Instead of cutting the deficit in half, President Obama has DOUBLED it for four years straight.

We need accountability from the budget process greater than the campaign promises of anyone who cares to make them. I've authored a constitutional amendment to require Congress and the President to balance the budget. The federal government cannot in good conscience spend more money than it takes in. It will take considerable reform to get to that point, but I believe that we can, given a little time and enough gumption.

In the meantime, we should not be subjected to sitting on our hands while we watch empty campaign promises and our national fiscal situation move in opposite directions.