

STATE & LOCAL

Obama's New Budget Proposal: Two Sides

Julia Dent, Staff Writer and Emily Hawkins, Layout Editor

"Irresponsible and Unpatriotic," by Dent

On February 13, 2011 President Obama presented his new budget plan, which has since been called "the most expensive White House budget request in United States history," according to Andrew Stilles. His article entitled "Obama Spend It Now" was published on February 14, 2012 in the Washington Free Beacon. In this new proposal federal spending will increase from \$3.8 trillion in 2013 to \$5.8 trillion in 2022, which marks an increase in spending by 53 percent. The budget plan will allow Obama to spend \$47 trillion within the next decade, adding an additional \$6.7 trillion to the federal budget deficit. To help pay for this new plan, American taxpayers' debt would increase from \$12.6 trillion to \$19.4 trillion, a rise of 54 percent.

By the end of his first term as President, Obama will have added \$5.7 trillion to the national debt, more than any former president, even though he called President Bush's \$4 trillion added to the debt "irresponsible and unpatriotic" (Stilles).

So where are all of these trillions of taxpayer's money going? In the new proposal for 2013, \$70 billion of this will go towards education (compared to the \$57.4 billion spent in 2008), and \$74 billion will go to the Transportation Department, an increase of 692 percent from the \$10.7 billion spent in 2008. Obama's plan is to invest money into programs to help the current economy. Many people

are concerned because this proposal would require spending money that the nation does not have. The Budget Control Act does eliminate spending by \$1.2 trillion and adds a tax increase. Stilles quotes a GOP familiar with this budget process who said, "This is the biggest gimmick in here, nobody should be buying it. These are savings that were imposed on the president, that are already in the law, that he is now claiming credit for."

The White House says that the country will be saving \$800 billion from ending the war in Iraq, but since the money was never meant to be spent, it cannot be "saved." Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama said, "All of that money is borrowed. So when you cease to spend the money on the war, it's not as if there's extra money coming into a pot, which we can now spend" (Stilles).

Many people fear that this new budget plan will lead to an economic crisis such as the one in Greece, which is in its fifth year of recession. Unemployment is up to 20 percent there, with a quickly shrinking economy. Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington addressed the President's proposal and compared it to the current Greek economy, according to Leigh Ann Caldwell, author of CBS News' article titled "Obama's Budget a 'Road Map to Greece,'" published February 18, 2012. McMorris Rodgers said, "If we keep on going like this, the consequences will be devastating. The President's budget isn't a blueprint for America; it's a road map to Greece."

"Roadmap to Recovery," by Hawkins

Under President Obama, the country has experienced 23 straight months of job growth. However, experts agree that economic recovery is not over yet, so the the President needed to make his budget plan cost \$3.8 trillion for the 2013 fiscal year. This budget is far more than a typical fiscal blueprint for the following year; it is a roadmap to recovery that combines a stimulus package and a budget.

According to Huffington Post writer Andrew Taylor in "Obama Budget Heading to Congress," a summary of the plan is "stimulus-style spending on roads and schools and tax hikes on the wealthy to help pay the costs." An important tenet of the President's plan requires Americans and corporations to pay their fair share of taxes. Whether that means ensuring that people who earn over \$1 million pay at least 30% in income tax or eliminating tax breaks for large oil and gas companies, Obama is determined to make sure the American dream is possible for all—and this budget plan does just that by maintaining important financial gains that total more than millionaires and billionaires pay their administrative assistants. The budget protects the entitlement programs of Society Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, on which a majority of Americans rely, especially some of the most affected populations such as the elderly or the poor. Some stimu-

lus measures include improving infrastructure with a \$476 billion increase and bettering schools with \$8 billion for community colleges. Jobs will be created from both measures, thus helping the economic recovery.

Claims from prominent Republicans, such as Wisconsin Representative Paul Ryan, that the President is just "duck[ing] this country's fiscal problems" are false because while spending is clearly an issue, economic recovery is significantly more important. We can never solve the issue of spending if recession continues to persist.

The basic tenet of Keynesian economics, which was used to help us out of the Great Depression, is that spending helps recovery. Democrats and Obama himself acknowledge that no budget plan is perfect, but any budget plan that balances spending cuts and tax increases for a balanced future is better than any one-sided plan that requires significant sacrifice for the needy, while defense budgets and the rich sacrifice little.

Obama summarized his new budget plan best when he was at a campaign stop in Northern Virginia earlier this month. He said, "We can't just cut our way into growth. We can cut back on the things that we don't need, but we also have to make sure that everyone is paying their fair share for the things that we do need." By protecting important programs through a mix of tax increases and spending cuts, the president ensures that the country will not follow in the footsteps of Greece.

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February 1
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What's Up In Raleigh: 2/29-3/13

collected by Ashleigh Phillips, co-editor

2.29: *NC State vs. Miami at RBC Center*

3.2: *Celtic Woman Progress Energy Center*
Harlem Globetrotters at RBC Center

3.3: *Sunny Ledford at City Limits*

3.5: *Woodsman at King's*

3.8: *Mayday Parade and We The Kings at Lincoln Theater*

3.9: *Casting Crowns at RBC Center*
White Rabbits and War On Drugs at Lincoln Theater

3.10: *Cirque du Soleil "Micheal Jackson: The Immortal" at RBC Center*