

Nov. 17, 2011

Dear Mr. Orr:

Thank you for your letter regarding solutions to our national debt. I also appreciated our recent phone conversation.

Like you, I am deeply concerned by the government's excessive spending and its potential consequences for our economy and our nation. You are welcome to review a variety of speeches and communications I have made on this topic at my website, beginning with a video I recorded on the eve of the debt limit vote in the U.S. House of Representatives:

http://www.youtube.com/user/JeffFortenberry#p/u/23/muu-w_R8onY. You can also find a video of the townhall meeting I held in Lincoln this August with former U.S. Comptroller General David Walker, a national expert on congressional spending and a prominent advocate of budget reform.

The letter I recently signed with 100 House colleagues, including 40 Republicans, urges the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to "go big" in reducing America's debt – to go beyond the required \$1.2 trillion in reductions and shoot for a target of \$4 trillion. To successfully reach this amount of savings, we recognize that all options for spending and revenues should be "on the table." This letter is signed by a diverse range of members of Congress, including Representative Ron Paul of Texas. A parallel letter in the U.S. Senate has been signed by Senator Mike Johanns.

It is clear that a substantial portion of the savings must come in spending reductions; we all must sacrifice in this regard. In respect to revenue, I recently read a report about the corporation General Electric (GE) filing a 57,000 page tax return last year while paying no taxes on \$14 billion in profit. Under our current tax system, those who can afford to hire armies of attorneys and accountants - and with favorable capital conditions - can avoid taxation. This unfairly pushes more of the tax burden onto small businesses and working families. By implementing the right kind of tax reform, we can make our convoluted tax code simpler and fairer and close existing loopholes and it may be possible to lower some tax rates. Doing

so will help unleash the entrepreneurial power of our economy and increase revenues.

I am not afraid to put my budgeting credentials on the table. I stood against the bailout of Wall Street (TARP), industrial bailouts, the economic stimulus bill, and the strong-armed government overhaul of the health care system. These were unprecedented interventions by the federal government into the American economy.

Our national debt stands at more than \$15 trillion, or almost \$48,000 per American. It is time to make the hard decisions and achieve meaningful deficit reduction. If we do this, confidence will increase, the economy will improve, and the U.S. government will stop the extreme borrowing.

Again, thank you for sharing your concerns. I welcome your input on this most important matter.

Sincerely,

Jeff Fortenberry

Member of Congress