

December 10, 2009

The Honorable Steve Scalise
429 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for the “CAP the DEBT Act”

Dear Rep. Scalise,

I write in support of your “CAP the DEBT Act,” and encourage your colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to co-sponsor and otherwise support this bill.

With federal spending ballooning out of control, the “CAP the DEBT Act” is a necessary step towards reigning in the fiscal recklessness demonstrated by this Congress.

Currently, the debt limit can be increased without accountability. Members are given political cover by sneaking the debt limit into the joint budget resolution. This allows Congress to continue to spend deliriously instead of forcing policymakers to diagnose their irresponsible fiscal practices, and without ever having to cast a separate roll call vote on this issue.

For years, when the bill comes due at the end of the fiscal year, Congress has assumed that it would never default on its payment because the ease with which it can raise the debt limit has allowed it to act as if a limit did not exist. The fact that the current increase being considered is nearly twice that which was projected in the FY2010 budget demonstrates that lawmakers have legislated without deference to their budget constraints.

Your bill would ensure that no shenanigans can be played with such an important vote affecting all taxpayers. It would repeal the Gephardt Rule that allows the debt limit to be attached to the budget resolution and forces a separate, roll-call vote on the increase. The “CAP the DEBT Act” would also require a 2/3 majority vote in both chambers to increase the debt limit. This is a necessary step to ensure that the debt limit increase can no longer be used as a means to pay for careless spending and holds members’ feet to the fire on their reckless policies.

Taxpayers across the country are dealing with lower bottom lines and smaller paychecks. They do not have the option of expanding their household budgets to support irresponsible spending with careless abandon, and Congress should be no different.

We hope your fellow members will support the “CAP the DEBT Act,” and look forward to working with you to increase fiscal accountability in the federal government in the future.

Sincerely,



Executive Director
Center for Fiscal Accountability