

Last Friday, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released its [analysis](#) of the fiscal impact of President Obama's most recent budget proposal. It is a sobering report, concluding that the President's budget would make today's more than trillion dollar deficit an annual fixture starting in 2018. As alarming as these deficits are, they are a symptom of an even larger problem: Washington's inability to control spending. Since World War II, federal spending has averaged about 20% of gross domestic product (GDP); GDP serves as a broad measure of economic activity. In other words, the federal government has constituted approximately 20% of the economy in recent decades. Yet CBO estimates that under President Obama's proposed budget, federal spending will never fall below 23% of GDP and will exceed 25% by the end of this decade. This unprecedented peacetime expansion in the size of the federal government is simply unacceptable. If not reversed, it will bury our children in more debt and drag our economy down.

I have long supported a constitutional amendment to require the federal government to balance its budget. However, a federal budget that is balanced at one-quarter or one-third of the U.S. economy is no victory for the principle of limited government. I believe we must go further: a strict restraint on the size and scope of the federal government. For this reason, I recently cosponsored House Joint Resolution 79, the [Spending Limit Amendment](#). This measure would amend the Constitution to prohibit federal spending from exceeding 20% of GDP, which will limit the size and reach of the federal government and force Washington to make the difficult decisions necessary to get spending under control. The limit could be waived only by a congressional declaration of war or by a two-thirds majority of both the House and Senate. I believe it is time to impose real spending restraint on Washington, D.C.