



Keith Fitzgerald Fiscal Responsibility Plan

We must stop the waste, special interest manipulation of the tax code, and reign in out of control spending in Washington and begin to reduce our national debt. In late 1990s, we had a balanced budget under President Clinton, but both Democrats and Republicans have caused our debt and deficit to grow out of control. We can no longer avoid addressing the nation's fiscal challenges and balancing our budget requires tough decisions from both parties.

All too often, Washington avoids the tough decisions and is all too busy serving special interests and themselves. Here are my commonsense proposals to restore some sanity to our fiscal crisis:

Overhaul the Budget Process: The budget process in Congress needs to be redesigned. I support combining the Appropriations and Finance Committees together into a singular Budget Committee. Members of the Budget Committee should be responsible for meeting planned and justifiable budget targets.

Simplify and Reform the Tax Code. I am opposed to any tax increases on hardworking middle class families. Aside from individual rates, our entire tax code needs reform. It is unnecessarily complex and riddled with special interest loopholes. We must simplify our tax code because regular hardworking Americans don't have the luxury or resources to hire insiders and lobbyists with access to Congress. Even President Reagan agreed that we should "close the unproductive tax loopholes that allow some of the truly wealthy to avoid paying their fair share."

Here are a few ways we can simplify our tax code:

- **Introduce Legislation to Offset Tax Loopholes and Deductions.** Congress should have to individually approve all deductions based on their merit and fairness and performance.
- **Eliminate Wasteful Tax Breaks and Deductions, Including Those for Big Oil Companies.** While hardworking families are paying high prices at the pump, oil companies are making record profits and still collecting billions in tax breaks.
- **Prohibit Tax Deductions for Companies that Ship Jobs Overseas.** Our tax code allows a tax deduction for companies to ship jobs overseas. This is wrong and we cannot have a tax code that promotes the outsourcing of American jobs.¹
- **Abolish Loopholes Benefiting the Ultra Wealthy.** Currently, there are loopholes in our tax code for yacht owners, corporate jet purchases and race horses. We must go through our tax code and eliminate these and other reckless budget-busting deductions.

¹ Bloomberg, [7/17/12](#)

Eliminating Government Waste, Fraud and Abuse. One of the steps that we can take for significant savings is to crack down on waste, fraud and abuse. We must have the resolve to go through line by line in our budget.

- **Banning Earmarks.** In addition to the \$50 million of earmarks supported by Congressman Buchanan, Members of Congress from both parties sponsored billions each year in pet projects. The Washington Post even found that multiple lawmakers supported questionable earmarks that would benefit their families or pocketbooks.² Earmarks are supposedly banned, but still occurring in backdoor ways, and these practices need to stop.
- **Eliminating Duplicative Programs.** GAO found that there are 32 areas where government programs do redundant work. The federal government could save tens of billions of dollars by eliminating duplicate or overlapping programs.³
- **Crack Down on Medicare and Medicaid Fraud.** Millions of Floridians rely on Medicare and Medicaid but there are billions of dollars in improper fraudulent payments. GAO estimated there were at least \$48 billion in improper payments in 2010, and we must improve accountability.⁴
- **Prohibit the Ultra Wealthy from Collecting Government Subsidies.** There are thousands of millionaires who have been collecting farm subsidies and unemployment insurance. We must ensure that the wealthiest Americans are prohibited from taking advantage of programs for middle class families.
- **Sell-off unused federal property.** In addition to the savings from maintenance costs, the federal government could expedite the disposal of unneeded properties and the consolidation of properties across and within federal agencies. GAO found that there were over 45,000 underutilized buildings costing \$1.66 billion a year. The government currently is in the process of selling 14,000 buildings, but we can do much more.⁵
- **Reduce federal vehicle fleet and costs by 20%.** Federal agencies own or lease over 652,000 vehicles. Since 2006, more than 20,000 vehicles have been added to the fleet and costs to operate the vehicles have risen 5.4%. Reducing our fleet could save the government \$500 million.⁶
- **Collect Delinquent Taxes from Contractors.** We must ensure that contractors pay back taxes owed to the government. Contractors who play by the rules shouldn't have to compete against companies that don't pay tax.

Line item veto power. Under President Clinton, the line item veto authority saved the government almost \$2 billion dollars in 1996. I would support legislation that would allow Congress to hold an up or down vote on the President's proposed cuts in spending bill.

² Washington Post, [2/6/12](#)

³ USA Today, [2/28/12](#)

⁴ GAO, [3/2/11](#)

⁵ ABC News, [3/3/11](#)

⁶ Effingham Herald, [7/23/12](#)