

U.S. Rep. Pocan: Speaks against extreme MAGA plan to default America

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressional Equality Caucus Chair U.S. Representative Mark Pocan (WI-02) spoke on the House Floor on House Republican's plan to hold the economy hostage or force massive cuts to essential benefits and programs for Americans in order to raise the debt ceiling. [Click here to watch the remarks and find the transcript below.](#) **Rep. Mark Pocan**

May 16, 2023

Floor Remarks House GOP's Plan to Default America

Remarks as Delivered

Republicans aren't being honest when they tell you they are trying to negotiate in good faith on the nation's debt ceiling.

First, this shouldn't be a "negotiation"; it's paying our bills we've already spent. We've lifted the debt ceiling over 80 times before, including three times during President Trump's tenure, because you have to pay your bills.

And second, the legislation they passed as an alleged negotiation shows how drastic they would like to cut spending, but can't - because they can't even put any specifics on paper, like the President and the Democrats have. They'd love to cut programs drastically, but the cuts would hurt so many Americans they can't actually do it. That's why they haven't released a budget.

Look I serve on the Appropriations Committee - let me explain what the

Republicans want to do.

They passed a bill to cut spending to FY2022 levels. That sounds innocuous enough, but here's what it actually means. Deep cuts.

We have discretionary and non-discretionary spending.

We can't cut non-discretionary spending like Social Security and Medicare because, well, it's your money that we hold onto as a public trust. So by law, we can't cut non-discretionary spending. That only leaves discretionary funds that can be changed.

Now discretionary funds are eligible for cuts or increases, but the GOP majority further limits that, by saying they won't cut Pentagon spending. That amounts to over half of the discretionary funds.

That leaves a much smaller portion of the total budget to absorb all the cuts they propose, adding up to a 22% cut of all remaining funds. 22% of the funds that help veterans. 22% of the funds to protect the border and funds for Meals on Wheels programs and funds for Railroad Safety Inspections. Education. Housing. Healthcare. All cut.

Think about those levels of cuts. And what the effect on you and your family.

They talk a tough game on the border but if they cut 22% of the funding going to protect the border. Cutting border patrols and customs officers could increase the flow of people into the country and cut back on searches for fentanyl and other drugs at our points of entry.

They say they want to back the blue and support our police. But 22% cuts to federal law enforcement and grants to local police departments are hardly the support they need.

They say they support our veterans – but cut veterans' food assistance programs and Housing Choice vouchers, hurting 10's of thousands of veterans who've bravely served. Even the PACT Act that finally made it through Congress to help veterans exposed to toxic chemicals wouldn't get the funding needed to help those who served our nation.

But it keeps going. These cuts would affect:

180,000 fewer children would have access to child care.

10,800 fewer OSHA inspections of plants would expose workers to unsafe conditions.

Drug treatment courts would lose funding, and 29,000 fewer people would be able to get treatment for opioid addiction.

There's a reason why they can't put out a full budget - because these types of cuts are not workable.

But it's worse. If they do fund some areas, other areas will see even deeper cuts. 30% or more cuts in some of the areas I just mentioned.

And if they don't get those cuts, they won't pay our nation's current bills and will force our nation into default.

Look when you sign a mortgage, you can't decide whether or not you are going to send your monthly check. If you default, you lose your house, and your credit is shot. The same is true for the federal government.

But you'll also be directly affected by Republican default. Millions of people would lose their jobs. Interest rates for homebuyers and small businesses would go up overnight. Stocks would tank, sinking your retirement investments.

Congress has to pay its bills like you do. Responsibly. And you do that by lifting the debt ceiling now.

And if not, well then, Mr. President invoke parts of the 14th Amendment to pay our bills and not damage the economy. Enough messing around. Get the job done, House Republicans, your constituents deserve it.

I yield back.