



BUDGET COMMITTEE



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For Immediate Release

May 15, 2008

**Senator Gregg's Senate Floor Statement on
Motion to Instruct Conferees of the FY09 Budget Resolution Conference,
Prohibiting \$1 Trillion+ in Spending
May 15, 2008
(unofficial transcript)**

Right now I'm going to talk about the \$1 trillion spending motion. This instruction says we shouldn't be spending more than \$1 trillion on discretionary accounts. This Democratic budget has for the first time surpassed the \$1 trillion mark. That should be a fairly big red flag. We're now going to spend \$1 trillion in discretionary spending.

I have trouble comprehending what \$1 trillion is and I suspect everybody does. If you take all the taxes paid since we began as a Republic, I believe it totals something like \$42 trillion, over 200 years. This one budget is going to spend a fairly significant amount of what has been raised in taxes since our country began.

It is a big number, \$1 trillion. It seems to me that we ought to maybe draw a line here, take a breath, and say, 'oops, let's think about what we're doing. Let's see if, rather than spending that huge amount of money, we might save a little bit of money.'

Last year, the Democratic budget and then the Democratic appropriations bills would have increased spending by \$22 billion. And it is not just a one-year event when you raise spending by \$22 billion, that compounds over five years. It is \$22 billion plus interest and it adds up. In fact, a five-year number is probably close to \$220 billion or \$250 billion when you spend \$22 billion in one year. So it's a lot of money.

Last year, they wanted to increase spending by \$22 billion on non-defense discretionary spending. This year, it's not absolutely clear because it hasn't been disclosed, but we know they plan to spend over \$20 billion more than the President's request on non-defense discretionary spending again. And that's why the Democratic budget takes us over \$1 trillion. I believe it's \$1.015 trillion in this budget on non-emergency discretionary spending.

Well, as I said, it's time for a time-out. That's what this motion to instruct says. It says, 'let's go back and rethink this effort.' Can't we, somewhere in that \$1 trillion, find enough

savings to get us back under \$1 trillion? Shouldn't we certainly sort of be saying, 'well, we're just not going to push the American taxpayer over the \$1 trillion number?' Rather, we're going to say to the American taxpayer, 'we will make extra effort here to try to reduce spending in this account if we want to increase spending in that account' rather than constantly add on to the spending?

This Democratic budget has absolutely no programmatic savings in it. The President suggested some savings from ineffective programs. I believe his savings added up to about \$15 billion. But none of those were accepted. None of those are put in this budget. None of those are assumed. In fact, all it does is add to spending and add to programs. It's hard to believe that in a \$1 trillion budget we couldn't find a mere 1% or 2% of savings by reducing programs which have either outlasted their usefulness or by not increasing them as much as proposed or maybe even reducing them.

In most instances, we're talking about slowing the rate of growth, we're not talking about reducing. So this is a red flag amendment. It says, 'Let's pause. Let's think about this. Do we really want to just blow through the \$1 trillion mark on the discretionary side of the ledger without having made some effort to try to save some money around here to reallocate money, to set priorities and to do things that are affordable?' I don't think we should.

And that's why we're calling on the conferees to take some action here to bring this number back under \$1 trillion. That means they have to save \$15 billion -- that's 1%. Gosh, they ought to be able to do that. I know it's a lot of money -- \$15 billion -- but on a \$1 trillion budget it certainly ought to be a doable event.

It does seem to me the American people deserve that type of effort by us. We could all earn our pay around here a number of times over if we saved the American people \$10 billion or \$20 billion and allow them to keep that money so they can spend it and make their lives better rather than have the government spend it for them.

So that's what this motion does. It instructs the conferees to bring this budget back under the \$1 trillion level on the discretionary side. With that, I reserve the balance of my time.