

The Military Community Says “Stop Spending”

1200 words

Harlingen, Texas, February 1, 2010: This week the Obama Administration submitted a \$3.8 Trillion budget to Congress, which forecasts a \$1.6 Trillion budget deficit for the coming year. While this was taking place Americans across the country were calling out their concerns about the economy, excessive spending and loss of American jobs. Loudly voicing such concerns, many members of the 29 million military veterans and retirees were among those speaking out.

Veterans and military retirees always find a sinking economy more than just news headlines. Large numbers of them live on very limited or fixed incomes. Among those who are still part of the labor force there is even greater concern. While the national unemployment rate hovers at around 10%, our American veterans are among the most seriously impacted people in the labor force. Unemployment for veterans stands at a national high of 11.2%.

Grant Beck is a retired Marine Corps Sergeant Major who lives in Jacksonville, NC. He believes we should completely stop pork barrel spending and earmarks attached to every bill that ends up on the White House desk. “I’m willing to bet that alone would go a long way toward getting this obscene debt down significantly.” He continues saying, “Simplify the tax code and cut taxes, especially corporate taxes that are now causing jobs to go off-shore because that is the only way they can make a profit. With lower taxes the companies would hire more American workers...and then generate more taxes and revenue for the government.”

Writing from the Philippines is retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Paul Kelly. He starts off saying he was a registered Democrat in Massachusetts and adds, “We need to face the financial problems of the country with control, as you need it in your personal life. We need to spend wisely and control borrowing. The idea of taking from one to give to another just because the other exists is not reasonable. Redistribution of wealth is a failed theory of socialism and has no place in a democracy. We need an economy where a person can earn his own way and where those physically or mentally unable to care for themselves are taken care of in a reasonable, humane way.”

Another veteran, Pete Church of Plano, TX says, “Whether it is a new or old idea, cut taxes - as this is always the way to stimulate the economy. Cut government spending. Create a balanced budget amendment with no exceptions. You should only spend what you have in income. There is nothing genius here, just common sense.”

Wayne C. Bucklaew, a retired Navy Chief from Natalie, VA believes the Democratic House and Senate are doing everything possible to deny promised retirement benefits. He also thinks, “We should get the government out of Wall Street, the banks and the auto industry. This is not a socialist country; it is a private enterprise country and should remain so in all respects. The Bush tax cuts should be made permanent and the death tax abolished completely. A person works his entire life to leave a nest egg to his children than has the government take 50% of it for him succeeding in life. There should be no such tax on anybody, anywhere, under any circumstances.”

Another Navy Chief who retired after 20 years of service is John Billings of Templeton, MA. He too is concerned about the economy. “To make it better means tax cuts,” he says. “We need tax cuts to stimulate the economy, no making more government funded jobs including socialized health care or phony cap and trade legislation. I am against affirmative action and the government telling banks who they have to lend money too.”

A retired Marine Colonel, Jim Bathurst tells us about his neighbor who just retired as a union carpenter. “He got a letter” say, Bathurst, “telling him he will have to expect a drastic cut in his pension in coming months since there are not enough workers paying into the union pension fund to maintain the payments for those retired.” He writes this to point out that not only is the national debt a major concern, but also since everything flows ‘downhill’ public and private debtors is impacted. As an economist he also sees more trouble on the horizon. “Our debt is encumbered by many other factors that no one has even considered. For example, a second wave of mortgage defaults is just around the corner and it is larger than the first. The FHA is raising down payment requirements, which will qualify fewer homebuyers. Home prices will decline again.”

Army veteran Eric Muth says, “We need a new stimulus package that encourages the manufacture of products by Americans and at the same time tightens trade restrictions geared at a balance of trade requiring our trading partners to import from us as much as they export to us.”

Retired Marine Gunnery Sergeant Jaime C. Aguilar-Allen wants to see this country “Lower taxes, which will encourage business to restore its outsourced labor. Lower taxes will encourage American manufacturers to build American and buy American. An American built item with American labor may cost more than a Chinese made part, but by the offset of a lower tax base that cost of American products should remain relatively stable.”

Another retired Marine Colonel, Jim Carothers of Slidell, LA strongly believes we need job creation through a tax system reform and free market incentives. “We need business and investment tax breaks”. He claims this will unshackle American business. He would also like to see us, “Change the current income tax structure to a flat tax system where everybody pays. If you can’t pay your taxes, you are not building America, you are just ‘Overhead’, not value added.”

Carothers would eliminate death taxes, eliminate capitol gains taxes and have no more sin tax increases. He also believes Congress is ‘squandering’ our tax dollars because we allow them to do it. He feels we should demand that such practices stop.

Rita Singer or DuBois, PA wants Congress to start showing some ‘Financial Responsibility!’ “This means stop deficit spending. If you don’t have the cash in hand, you can’t spend it. You can’t afford everything.”

And finally, Art Cohan, a retired Master Gunnery Sergeant from Harlingen, TX writes, “It seems to me the crux of the problem in that city (Washington) is the career politicians with their uncontrolled wasteful spending, mostly aimed at gaining votes to perpetuate their careers. The first step should be term limits aimed at returning our elected officials to the ‘citizen politicians’ serving a brief period, rather than a career. They would be less prone to cater to party and administration and more inclined to answer to the constituents. We also need a ‘Required Reduction’ in the budget, not just a balanced budget. This should be maintained until the real deficit is zero! The third step should be total transparency, so that most shenanigans, pork deals, etc. are exposed as they happen.”

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