

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today said that on the brink of default we should be making serious efforts to raise the debt ceiling and reduce the national debt without placing the burden of future debt reduction directly upon the middle class.

“The plan we’re considering today is not the product of bipartisan compromise,” said Slaughter on the House floor today. “We are considering a bill that the Majority knows will never be approved by the Senate nor signed by the President. Members of the House are being asked to vote on the legislation despite having no idea what cuts are in the bill. Any Democrat who votes for this bill could be cutting Social Security, or heating for low income families, and not even know it. To ask the House to vote on undisclosed cuts is a cynical waste of time.”

She continued:

“Are we a nation that asks the most of those who have the least? Or are we a nation of shared sacrifice and fairness, a nation that asks every American to do their fair share? Today’s bill turns upside-down any notion of fairness, and proposes radical changes to our Constitution that would protect millionaires and special interests, while making it easier than ever to take from the middle class.”

On the idea that a short-term solution would be the correct path forward, she said:

“Today’s reckless plan would put us right back in this same situation a few months from now, when the atmosphere is even more politically charged by the coming election. Our economy and our markets won’t have the stability they need, and credit agencies will have no choice but to downgrade U.S. debt. This would cause interest rates to rise, effectively raising taxes for every American family. The leaders of the Majority know this, and have said so publicly, but they don’t seem to care.”

Her comments came as she managed a debate on the House floor considering the rule. A full transcript of her remarks is included below.

[Video of her floor statement is available here.](#)

### **Slaughter’s Remarks on the House Floor**

M. Speaker,

We all recognize that we have two separate, but equally urgent issues facing our country—raising our debt ceiling and reducing our nation’s debt. In this Congress we should make serious efforts to do both. However, after 100 years of protecting the full faith and credit of the United States by raising the debt ceiling without pause, the Majority has decided to hold the

debt ceiling hostage in order to push drastic cuts, and place the burden of future debt reduction squarely upon the middle class. This unprecedented effort to put ideology before country has led us to the brink of default- a prospect that is all too real as we vote today.

The plan we're considering today is not the product of bipartisan compromise. We are considering a bill that the Majority knows will never be approved by the Senate nor signed by the President. Members of the House are being asked to vote on the legislation despite having no idea what cuts are in the bill. Any Democrat who votes for this bill could be cutting Social Security, or heating for low income families, and not even know it. To ask the House to vote on undisclosed cuts is a cynical waste of time.

Furthermore, this bill shrugs aside the burden of governing. It asks us to vote like a mock government, and pass the buck to a commission to make decisions for us- leaving us to simply rubber stamp whatever they decide. That is not why I was elected to Congress, and it is an abandonment of the responsibilities we are all sworn to uphold.

Today's reckless plan would put us right back in this same situation a few months from now, when the atmosphere is even more politically charged by the coming election. Our economy and our markets won't have the stability they need, and credit agencies will have no choice but to downgrade U.S. debt. This would cause interest rates to rise, effectively raising taxes for every American family.

The leaders of the Majority know this, and have said so publicly, but they don't seem to care. In a June 13th interview with Politico, Majority Leader Cantor said, "We feel very strongly that one of the reasons why we continue to see an ailing economy is that people have very little confidence, have very little certainty in terms of where we are headed". In that same interview he was explicit that he wants a single debt ceiling vote for this Congress, and not, as he said "a series of short-term extensions, as some have suggested."

The following week Politico quoted Leader Cantor as saying, "If we can't make the tough decisions now, why would we be making those tough decisions later? I don't see how multiple votes on a debt ceiling increase can help get us to where we want to go." Yet here we are today, considering a bill that will require a second debt ceiling vote just 6 months from now.

Not only is this bill terrible policy and a waste of our time, but the rule before us clears the way for a Constitutional amendment that would give a simple majority the ability to cut spending, while only allowing the government to raise revenues with approval of 3/5 of the entire Congress.

This cut-first, think later approach would directly harm the middle class. This amendment stacks the deck in favor of future cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, while making it virtually impossible to close tax loopholes for oil companies and millionaires who own private jets.

As if this wasn't enough, the process by which we will vote on this amendment is a disgrace to this institution. Under today's rule, the Majority proposes we consider this Constitutional

amendment under suspension of the rules- the most closed procedure we have. As we all should know, suspension of the rules is designed for non-controversial legislation such as naming a post office or congratulating a winning sports team. To give a constitutional amendment the same consideration as renaming a post office is embarrassing for us and a disgrace to our nation and to the dignity and tradition of the House.

In closing, today's debate is about fairness.

Are we a nation that asks the most of those who have the least? Or are we a nation of shared sacrifice and fairness, a nation that asks every American to do their fair share? Today's bill turns upside-down any notion of fairness, and proposes radical changes to our Constitution that would protect millionaires and special interests, while making it easier than ever to take from the middle class.

For this reason I strongly urge my colleagues to vote 'no' on today's rule and the underlying legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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