

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 6, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

Any day now, news reports suggest you will ask Congress to approve yet another increase in the debt ceiling. The expected request is another \$1.2 trillion, adding to a three year debt binge that has totaled \$4.5 trillion on your watch and that has enabled our overall debt to surpass \$15 trillion. Your latest request will push the federal debt limit well above \$16 trillion.

This pending request will be the sixth time during your Presidency that Congress is being asked to keep allowing government and spending to grow at rates that are unsustainable. In other words, you have made it a routine part of your job to ask for more room to spend without any plan to reduce our debt.

Instead of making debt ceiling increases a routine Washington exercise, we need to make it routine to actually spend no more than we take in. Until then, I will oppose your request to continue borrowing and spending recklessly.

As I wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* in March 2011, I will oppose a debt ceiling increase unless such an authorization is accompanied by a real plan to tackle our debt. Ideally, such a plan would feature both pro-growth elements and spending restraints, including fundamental tax reform, regulatory reform, meaningful cuts to discretionary spending, a balanced-budget amendment, and reforms to save Social Security and Medicare.

If we had done this in mid-2011 when we last debated the debt ceiling, we could have set America on a path to economic growth and prosperity. This would have led to more jobs and, in turn, to more duly employed taxpayers generating more growth-driven revenue to help us pay down our debt. Instead, you failed to lead, punted the tough decisions and, in doing so, our credit rating was downgraded for the first time in our history. It's a tragic reality but, on your watch, more and more people have come to believe that America is becoming a deadbeat nation inevitably heading toward a European-style debt crisis.

When you served in the Senate in 2006, you called raising the debt limit "a sign of leadership failure." Using your own standard, this request will mark your sixth "sign of leadership failure" on the debt ceiling issue alone. Throughout our history, Americans have revered courageous leaders and celebrated them as profiles in courage. Unfortunately, the first three years of your presidency have been a profile in leadership failure. While you may choose to run your reelection campaign against a "Do-Nothing Congress," your insistence on doing nothing to

meaningfully tackle our debt poses a direct threat to America's exceptional character and is leading us towards a diminished future.

America deserves leaders who will stand front and center, level with the American people about our challenges and offer real solutions to solve them. Instead of simply asking for another debt ceiling increase, I urge you to come forward with a real plan to tackle our debt in 2012.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MR', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marco Rubio
United States Senator