

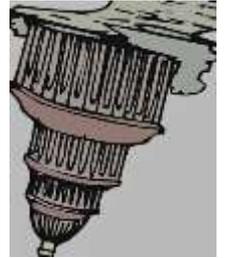
We have a real disaster.



We don't need a self-inflicted one.

Congress is returning on September 5, and it has a lot to do before the end of the month. If the President and Congress cannot agree on carrying out their basic responsibilities, we face the dual fiscal disasters of partial government shutdown and default on debts the government has incurred.

We need a genuinely positive agenda, investing in all our people, reducing poverty and providing opportunity for sustained economic security.



But let's face it: we're not going to get all that next month. But we must demand these minimal do's and don'ts:

DO:

- Do pass at least a [temporary spending bill](#) to keep programs for education, housing, child care, WIC, meals on wheels, public health and safety, and many other services functioning.
- Do pass an increase in the amount of [borrowing](#) the federal government can do, so that it can pay for the programs Congress has authorized.
- Do stabilize health insurance costs by ensuring continued payments to insurance companies ("[cost sharing reduction](#)" payments) that lower rates for higher-cost patients.
- Do reauthorize the [Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#), so it doesn't expire at the end of September.
- Do provide emergency funding as a down payment towards [helping the victims of Harvey](#) recover.
- Do work towards a bipartisan agreement to [lift the current spending caps](#), ensuring that the cap on domestic and international appropriations is raised no less than the cap on Pentagon spending.

DON'T:

- Don't pass a [full-year appropriations](#) bill (called an "omnibus") that underfunds all levels of education, job training, services for children, youth, and seniors, public health and safety, affordable housing, etc., while increasing Pentagon spending many billions of dollars above the cap set by law.
- [Don't make cuts in vital programs](#) (including Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP/food stamps, tax credits for low-income people, SSI, education, housing, Head Start...) the condition for passing federal spending bills, increasing the debt limit, or providing emergency relief for Harvey victims.
- Don't insist on tying more funds for a [border wall](#) or border enforcement, or [divisive policy language](#), to spending or debt limit bills needed to prevent government shutdowns or default.
- Don't pass a [budget resolution](#) that slashes vital services while proposing massive tax breaks for wealthy individuals and corporations.

To tell Congress to fix disasters, not inflict them, you can find an email to send [here](#).