### 1NC—Fiscal Discipline DA

#### [THE NEXT OFFCASE POSITION IS THE FISCAL DISCIPLINE DA]

#### First, sequestration has put the U.S. on a path to fiscal discipline that will restore economic growth and investor confidence.

Avella 2/28 — David Avella, President of GOPAC—an organization dedicated to educating and electing a new generation of Republican leaders, holds a B.S. in Political Science from Shepherd University, 2013 (“Sequestration: Good for U.S. and GOP,” *Politico*, February 28th, Available Online at http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=907379A0-4DC4-4319-A5ED-EA2F78317D7F, Accessed 03-01-2013)

But is the sequester as bad for our economy as President Obama and the media have made it out to be? Absolutely not. The act of fiscal discipline puts our economy on a path to stability, ultimately benefiting the American economy.

Larry Kudlow, National Review Online’s economics editor, makes the case that when the government spending share of GDP declines, so does the true tax burden on the economy. As a result, more resources are left in the free-market private sector, which will promote real growth.

It’s an approach that is the exact opposite of what the president and his economic team have pursued since the first day of this administration. And, tragically, the state of our economy and job market shows the results.

The U.S. Treasury tells us that last year the United States under Obama added over $3 billion of debt per day. Add to this our annual $1 trillion deficits, reduced credit rating, 7.9 percent unemployment and sub-par economic growth, and we have a recipe for long-term economic pain.

The president’s response has consistently been to “ask” for more and more of our taxes to pay for it, rather than reduce wasteful or mathematically-unsound spending.

Our fiscal feebleness is the cause for long-term and damaging uncertainty that is preventing business owners from hiring and those with capital from investing.

By taking sound, serious steps to control spending via the sequester and implement fiscal discipline, we can restore a level of certainty to our economy, begin freeing Americans to hire and invest, and get our economy moving forward again.

Fiscal discipline that puts our country on stable footing, grows our economy, and gets Americans working again is a service to our country.

#### Any new spending will open the floodgates for sequester exceptions

Hook 3/20—Janet Hook is a political reporter for The Wall Street Journal Washington bureau. She has covered Congress and national politics since 1995.(“Senate Passes Bill to Fund Operations,” Published Online by the Wall Street Journal on March 20, 2013, Available Online at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324373204578372791684225004.html)

During Senate debate on the bill, lawmakers of both parties sought—largely without success—to offer amendments to undo the effects of the sequester on pet programs. Sen. Jerry Moran (R., Kan.) pushed an amendment to prevent projected furloughs of air-traffic controllers, which he said could threaten to close many airports in rural areas—including seven in Kansas.

Democratic leaders refused to allow most such amendments, fearing that would open the floodgates for sequester exceptions. They said efforts to reverse the sequester would be addressed in Democrats' 2014 budget resolution—a long-term plan for raising taxes and cutting spending that was brought to the Senate floor after the funding bill passed Wednesday.

#### The plan will change the tone in Washington and end gridlock—infrastructure is bipartisan.

Zakaria 12—Fareed Zakaria is host of CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS, editor at large of TIME, and a Washington Post columnist. He is the author of The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad and The Post-American World. Dr. Zakaria has won several awards for his columns and other writing. He currently serves as a trustee of Yale University. (“How to Rebuild Trust — and Infrastructure,” Published on November 7, 2012 for TIME Magazine, Available Online at http://swampland.time.com/2012/11/07/how-to-rebuild-trust-and-infrastructure/)

And yet it looks as if it won’t, because the partisan gridlock in Washington means that nothing gets done. A normal process of democratic legislation — each side making concessions to arrive at a compromise plan — has become impossible. Congressional Republicans, in particular, have decided that they would rather have the country be paralyzed than work with a President they have demonized.

Is there a way out? President Obama will have to try to find several — on a debt deal, immigration, energy. But perhaps the most pressing issue is also the one of greatest hope: infrastructure. Dealing with the larger challenges is important, but none of them will have an instant impact on the economy. A large push to rebuild America would. With economic growth still sluggish and unemployment in the construction industry at 11.4% — the highest of any field in the country — an ambitious effort in this area could yield immediate results.

In the long run, you cannot have robust growth without strong infrastructure. The U.S. has historically been world class in this regard. Only a decade ago we were ranked fifth in overall infrastructure by the World Economic Forum; today we have dropped to 25th. The American Society of Civil Engineers calculates that we have a $2 trillion backlog of repairs that must be done over the next five years to stay competitive.

Hurricane Sandy should give us a sense of urgency about these projects. Our crumbling levees, roads, subways and bridges are not just barriers to growth; they are dangers to our lives. We are simply not prepared for a world in which there will be sharp increases in hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts and perhaps even earthquakes. We could use concern about these threats to build a new and more resilient system, including most vitally a new energy and information grid, so that we are protected from nature, resilient in hardship and poised for growth.

(VIDEO: TIME Explains: How Obama Won)

Properly done, such a program would also save billions. Before Katrina, the New Orleans water system was losing 30% of its treated water in leaky pipes. (Around the U.S., this percentage is about 25%.) A new system could be far more efficient and detect leaks almost instantly. In almost every area, new technologies would reduce waste in energy, water and time.

Infrastructure improvement is something many Republicans and Democrats agree on. On immigration, taxes and the budget, deals are not happening because conservatives and liberals are deeply divided. That’s not true on infrastructure. Republican Senators Kay Bailey Hutchison and Lindsey Graham along with Democratic Senator Mark Warner and others have co-sponsored John Kerry’s legislation to create a national infrastructure bank. It’s an innovative idea for a partnership between the public and private sectors, ensuring that government funds get leveraged and projects get chosen on merit rather than for political reasons and are then executed efficiently. Many European countries use one — with superb results.

In the first debate, Romney made a smart and eloquent case for caution with regard to government spending. He explained that he thought any new government spending should pass this test: “Is it worth borrowing from the Chinese to pay for it?” I would argue that a national bank to rebuild America and give it a 21st century infrastructure passes this test with flying colors. In fact, right now, people everywhere are willing to lend money to the U.S. at rates that are lower than at any point in history, so we wouldn’t need any particular generosity from the Chinese.

Is there a special tactic that might help bring Republicans along? Well, in his gracious speech on Wednesday morning after his re-election, Obama noted that he hoped to talk to Romney about ways they might work together. Why not ask Romney if he would be willing to spearhead this project? It would be an act of bipartisanship in the service of a national interest — and it might just begin to change the tenor of Washington for the next four years.

#### Gridlock forces Congress to focus on debt reduction—it’s the only path forward.

Union University News 3/20—Citing a speech that Stephen Hayes gave at the university. Hayes is a columnist for the Weekly Standard. He previously spent six years as the director of the Institute for Political Journalism at Georgetown University. (“Hayes: Two cheers for gridlock in Washington,” Published by Union University News on March 20, 2013, Available Online at http://www.uu.edu/news/release.cfm?ID=2107)

JACKSON, Tenn. – March 20, 2013– Americans should celebrate gridlock in Washington rather than seeing it as an obstacle to progress, especially when nation faces a staggering amount of debt, according to FOX News contributor Stephen F. Hayes. “I think it’s a positive outcome when gridlock in Washington has forced the politicians we send there to focus on a problem they have long ignored – or, more accurately, have exacerbated, have created,” Hayes said March 19 at Union University. Hayes, senior writer at the Weekly Standard and author of two New York Times bestsellers, spoke in the Carl Grant Events Center as part of the 14th annual Union Forum luncheon lecture series. Addressing the political landscape in Washington, Hayes emphasized the importance of civility in political discourse as leaders with widely differing views of how government should operate try to tackle some of the nation’s problems. Though George Wallace in 1968 declared, “There’s not a dime’s worth of difference between the two political parties,” Hayes said that’s not true in Washington today. “There are tremendous differences between the political parties in Washington and outside of Washington,” he said, describing the proceedings there as “an epic battle between two competing and often wildly divergent ideologies represented however imperfectly by these two political parties.” President Obama ran to Hillary Clinton’s left in the 2008 Democratic primary on almost every issue, Hayes said, even though Obama had tried to position himself previously as a centrist. “In 2008 he ran as the anti-Bush, someone who could transform a dysfunctional Washington, but was nonetheless eager to give it more power,” Hayes said. Hayes said Obama hopes to do for liberalism what Ronald Reagan did for conservatism – mainstream it and make it broadly acceptable. But Obama’s two major legislative triumphs early in his first term – the stimulus package and health care reform – caused Americans to react negatively. Rallied by Tea Party Republicans, voters handed the Democrats a sound defeat in the 2010 election, which returned control of the House to the GOP. Many observers expected Obama, in the aftermath of the 2010 election, to follow the same path that Bill Clinton did in 1994 – moving to the middle. But instead, Hayes said, Obama did just the opposite, doubling down on his policies and calling for even more government spending. “There was no give,” Hayes said. “This is what he believed, and he was going to run on it.” Republicans failed to capitalize in the 2012 election (Hayes described Mitt Romney as a good man but a bad candidate who ran a horrible campaign), and Obama strengthened his pledges for an activist government. But the recent debate about the sequester reflected poorly on the president and his promises of chaos if the mandated budget cuts became reality, Hayes said. “The reason I think the sequester fight matters so much is because it’s a fight about a lot more than the sequester,” Hayes said. “This is the coming together of these two divergent views of how American government should relate to its citizens – of the role of government in American life. “I think the White House correctly understands that if it loses this battle, it makes the case for activist government even more difficult for it to make,” he continued. “If you can cut 5.3 percent of domestic discretionary spending, and most people get along, what’s the case for adding more and more and more, particularly when it’s adding to the debt?” The gridlock in Washington, Hayes concluded, means that politicians can’t worry as much about peripheral issues. “I’m thrilled that the discussion now is focused on our $16.7 trillion in debt,” he said. “These are issues, in my view, that are exactly what we should be debating.”

#### Finally, lack of fiscal discipline threatens U.S. global leadership—this magnifies the risk of every major impact and turns the case.

Lieberthal and O’Hanlon 12 — Kenneth G. Lieberthal, Director of the John L. Thornton China Center and Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy and Global Economy and Development at the Brookings Institution, former Professor at the University of Michigan, served as special assistant to the president for national security affairs and senior director for Asia on the National Security Council, holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University, and Michael E. O'Hanlon, Director of Research and Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution, Visiting Lecturer at Princeton University, Adjunct Professor at Johns Hopkins University, holds a Ph.D. from Princeton University, 2012 (“The Real National Security Threat: America's Debt,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 10th, Available Online at http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/07/10-economy-foreign-policy-lieberthal-ohanlon, Accessed 07-12-2012)

Drones, kill lists, computer viruses and administration leaks are all the rage in the current political debate. They indeed merit serious scrutiny at a time when the rules of war, and technologies available for war, are changing fast. That said, these issues are not the foreign policy centerpiece of the 2012 presidential race.

Economic renewal and fiscal reform have become the preeminent issues, not only for domestic and economic policy but for foreign policy as well. As the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Michael G. Mullen, was fond of saying, national debt has become perhaps our top national security threat. And neither major presidential candidate is doing enough about it. This issue needs to be framed as crucial not just for our future prosperity but for international stability as well.

The United States has been running trillion-dollar deficits, resulting in a huge explosion in the country's indebtedness. Publicly held debt now equals 70% of gross domestic product, a threshold many economists consider significant and highly worrisome. Making matters worse, half of our current deficit financing is being provided by foreigners. We are getting by with low interest rates and tolerable levels of domestic investment only because they find U.S. debt attractive, which may not last.

According to the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, President Obama's long-term budget plan would allow publicly held debt as a fraction of GDP to rise further, up to 75%, within a decade. Mitt Romney's proposal, featuring tax cuts and defense spending increases and as-yet-unspecified (and thus less than fully credible) entitlement reform, appears worse. It would probably drive publicly held debt to 95% of GDP over the same period. Put differently, though both are serious and pragmatic men, neither major party's presidential candidate is adequately stepping up to the plate, with Romney's plan the more troubling of the two.

Why is this situation so serious? First, we are headed for a level of debt that within a decade could require us to spend the first trillion dollars of every year's federal budget servicing that debt. Much less money will be left for other things. That is a prescription for a vicious cycle of underfinancing for our infrastructure, national education efforts, science research and all the other functions of government that are crucial to long-term economic growth. Robust defense spending will be unsustainable too. Once we get in this rut, getting out will be very hard.

Second, such a chronic economic decline would undercut what has been 70 years of strong national political consensus in favor of an activist and engaged American foreign policy. One reason the United States was so engaged through the Cold War and the first 20 years of the post-Cold War world was fear of threats. But the other reason was that the strategy was associated with improvements in our quality of life as well. America became even more prosperous, and all major segments of society benefited.

Alas, globalization and automation trends of the last generation have increasingly called the American dream into question for the working classes. Another decade of underinvestment in what is required to remedy this situation will make an isolationist or populist president far more likely because much of the country will question whether an internationalist role makes sense for America — especially if it costs us well over half a trillion dollars in defense spending annually yet seems correlated with more job losses.

Lastly, American economic weakness undercuts U.S. leadership abroad. Other countries sense our weakness and wonder about our purported decline. If this perception becomes more widespread, and the case that we are in decline becomes more persuasive, countries will begin to take actions that reflect their skepticism about America's future. Allies and friends will doubt our commitment and may pursue nuclear weapons for their own security, for example; adversaries will sense opportunity and be less restrained in throwing around their weight in their own neighborhoods. The crucial Persian Gulf and Western Pacific regions will likely become less stable. Major war will become more likely.

When running for president last time, Obama eloquently articulated big foreign policy visions: healing America's breach with the Muslim world, controlling global climate change, dramatically curbing global poverty through development aid, moving toward a world free of nuclear weapons. These were, and remain, worthy if elusive goals. However, for Obama or his successor, there is now a much more urgent big-picture issue: restoring U.S. economic strength. Nothing else is really possible if that fundamental prerequisite to effective foreign policy is not reestablished.