



Rep. Tom Emmer on NewsNation with Leland Vittert

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LELAND:

With that, Majority Whip, Congressman Tom Emmer of Minnesota, good to see you, sir. Thank you. Are you seeing a softening in the White House's position at all from no negotiations, it must be a clean raise of the debt ceiling, to all right, maybe we're willing to talk?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Actually, Leland, we haven't seen anything out of the White House since the beginning of this Congress. They haven't talked about any ideas. Same with the Schumer Senate. There's just no ideas forthcoming. The House, as you know, Kevin McCarthy and the House Republicans led by passing a debt ceiling solution almost two weeks ago now. This solution is over in the Senate. It's ready to go. We have done our job. And quite frankly, there's been no criticism of specific provisions. It's just a criticism in general of what Republicans have done to try and solve the problem.

LELAND:

Well, fair enough. Although we have heard from the White House now an invitation to come meet. That was something that had not been there, right? There was no discussion with Kevin McCarthy before you all passed this. You talk about the Senate, and there is a world in which the White House flips this on you guys, right? They get the Senate with Senator Schumer to pass a clean raising of the debt ceiling, and then suddenly it's back to the House. You think about the Republicans, though, there was a letter by Mike Lee saying that they stand with Kevin McCarthy. A couple of senators did not. Lisa Murkowski, Rand Paul, John Kennedy, Susan Collins, Josh Hawley and Mitt Romney did not sign the letter. You're the house whip. How much pressure is being put on Senate Republicans to hold the line of the House?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well, I think that's the wrong pressure. The pressure is on the White House. And literally since the beginning of this year, Joe Biden did talk to our speaker about getting together. Kevin talked to him back in January with the new Congress. He told him he was interested. Nothing happened. He talked to him again on St. Paddy's Day. We were told that there was some interest. Nothing happened. Speaker McCarthy sent the president a letter outlining what House Republicans would do. Still no response. What happened then is we passed the bill almost two weeks ago, sent it over to the Senate. And while you point out some names, I'll tell you what, one of the people out in the first batch saying he supported what we did, Senator Mitt Romney. So there's a huge support from Republicans over in the Senate. And quite frankly, Chuck Schumer, he can't get all of his members on board to do a debt ceiling increase without any spending reform. To call it clean, there's nothing more dirty than that, Leland.

LELAND:



Fair enough. But there is a world in which Republicans get pressured by Democrats in the Senate. And I guess my question to you is, what efforts are underway to try and keep the Republicans in the Senate as united as you all say the Republicans in the House are? I'm going to tell you, I think the Senate Republicans understand what the House Republicans and quite frankly...

LELAND:

So you're not worried about them caving?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Caving? No, I think they're over there backing up Kevin McCarthy's play. They know that this is about the American people. This is about making sure that we protect this great country, not just for the current generation, but for generations to come.

LELAND:

All right. The latest polling from The Washington Post here. If the debt ceiling is not raised and the government goes into default, who would you mainly blame for that? Republicans in Congress, Biden, both equally. Is there something wrong with your guys messaging on this?

REP. TOM EMMER:

I'm going to tell you, the vast majority of this country in polling that I've seen suggests that Kevin McCarthy is doing the right thing by trying to move a debt ceiling increase. And the president's doing the wrong thing by refusing to talk to the speaker about it.

LELAND:

Yeah, no, I get that. But then there's the political reality. Every time Republicans have gone through this, it wasn't on a debt ceiling, right, but it was on government shutdowns. And I've heard the same arguments. But every time Republicans get blamed for it and then they get shellacked, I'm going back to the Trump government shutdown. I'm going back all the way back to Bill Clinton's time. It's just never politically worked out well for Republicans. Is there a reason to think this time will be different?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well, I believe you're conflating debt ceiling politics with government shutdown politics. This is a much bigger deal when it comes to defaulting on our debt. It can have a major impact. It will. And frankly, House Republicans this time have passed the solution. And Leland, people have to recognize that in the last 30 years, the only meaningful spending reforms that we have seen in this country have been associated with debt ceiling discussions and negotiations. And remember, it was Nancy Pelosi just back in 2019 that said there should never be a debt ceiling increase without some reforms attached. So to have them argue otherwise now is a bit hollow.

LELAND:

All right. Fair enough. Hollowness in Washington is something we've grown accustomed to on both sides. Forgive my skepticism. It's good to see you, Congressman. Thank you very much, sir.



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