



Rep. Tom Emmer on CBS State of the Union Special

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NORA:

Minnesota Republican Congressman and House Majority Whip Tom Emmer joins us now. Congressman, good to have you. Thanks for joining us.

REP. TOM EMMER:

Good to be with you, Nora.

NORA:

What issues can Republicans find common ground on with the president?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well, I think we saw some of it last week, right? President Biden and Kevin McCarthy sat down last Wednesday, had a beginning of a conversation that hopefully is going to lead to some very fruitful results for the American people. Not for Republicans or Democrats, but literally for the American people that are counting on Congress to start getting some things done.

NORA:

What will it take for Congress to lift the debt ceiling?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Actually, I think it's pretty safe to say that we're going to be making sure that the U.S. honors its debt obligations, but at the same time, we got to have a reasonable talk about what we're going to do going forward in terms of the spending issues. How are we going to put this country on a better path to sustainability and prosperity for not just the current generation, but generations of Americans to come? Nora, you can't sustain bringing in, every dollar we bring in, we're spending \$1.29. That just doesn't work. So we're going to have a conversation. I think the president and Kevin McCarthy started this thing. It's the responsible thing to do. It's the reasonable thing to do. And I think the more sensible we all are, the better results we're going to get.

NORA:

Congressman, I'm going to bring in John Dickerson here. You've got the all-star panel of smart people here at CBS News who want to ask you a question. But they're starting with me anyway.

JOHN DICKERSON:

Congressman, when Republicans came into control, I remember in the 90s, John Kasich, when he took over the budget, he had specific spending items he wanted cut, used it as a way to talk about Republican priorities, that specificity. Certainly Paul Ryan was making budgets even before he became chairman of the Budget



Committee. In this instance, what specific spending cuts would you or Republicans put forward as a way of saying, this is what we believe, and this is why government needs to be shrunk, not just in the abstract, but in specific terms?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Yeah, John, if you think about this, by law, President Biden was supposed to provide a budget to Congress this past Monday. The first Monday in February, the president is supposed to put a budget out. And then by law, the Congress then has six weeks from the date that they received that budget to put up a response. So we're talking about spending reforms. We're talking about some general terms right now. The idea is, you are going to take care of the debt ceiling, but at the same time, you're going to put this country on a more sustainable path in terms of paying our debt obligations and making sure that we preserve opportunities for all Americans in years to come.

MARGARET BRENNAN:

Margaret Emmer, it's Margaret Brennan, good to talk to you, sir. When you look at some of those promises that were made to some of the more conservative members of your caucus, as we were looking at the election of Speaker McCarthy, there were specifics in there like capping spending levels at 2022 levels. Are those things actually up for negotiation, or are there going to be hard cuts to things like defense spending?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Yeah, first off, Margaret, Republicans aren't going to cut defense. We're going to make sure that our people that wear the uniform get the tools that they need to do the mission that they're going to be asked to do in the coming weeks, months and years. In the meantime, your characterization of caps is not correct. There was a discussion about returning in particular with the domestic spending that has taken place since the pandemic started has just bloated these programs beyond recognition. The idea was to try and take that back to an FY fiscal year 22 baseline and work from there. And by the way, the the agreement that was made was a was a caucus wide or conference wide agreement that Kevin McCarthy agreed to single subject matter bills, making sure that amendments are germane to the bill, making sure that the Holman rule is back in place, which allows for line item vetoes and appropriation bills, and an easy one for Americans to understand a 72 hour rule. I think most Americans would agree. Those of us that have election certificates should read the darn bills before we vote on them. Simple things like that that really haven't been honored in the last few years. That's what the agreement was.

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