



Rep. Tom Emmer on This Morning

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HOST:

Joining us now is House Majority Whip Tom Emmer of Minnesota. Good morning, Congressman. Thank you for being here. Republicans cheering last night as this passed by a very slim margin, but I think the question that everyone at home has is, what happens now?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well, thanks for having me. First off, remember, Republicans have a very slim majority in the House. Everybody matters. And it passed the House yesterday with overwhelming support. We had four members who wanted more, had other things that they were interested in, but they're not against the policy. Look, Republicans have provided a solution to the debt ceiling. It's over in the Senate. And if the president is being sincere, which he said he was going to veto things so far in the first three months that he reversed himself on, maybe he'll do that on this one. But bottom line is, if he's sincere, then Chuck Schumer and the Democrats leading the Senate have a solution to the debt ceiling problem with some historic spending reforms, almost \$4.8 trillion in savings over the next 10 years. And I suggest they take it up and pass it.

HOST:

Well, it doesn't seem like they will. Schumer has said it's dead on arrival. So is the question, is the nation closer to a default this morning?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well, it shouldn't be. Actually, the solution has been provided. Kevin McCarthy and House Republicans have once again led. The president, Chuck Schumer, all they've been doing is spouting rhetoric for three months. They want to play with American families, financial security and with the future of the financial future of this country. That's unacceptable. So I commend Kevin McCarthy, our speaker. I commend all our members because this bill was built from the bottom up. This was a collective process. We would have loved to have had the White House, the Senate Democrats participating, but they've chosen to play with our financial future for political reasons rather than get to the table and work it out. So guess what? Solution is over in the Senate. If you don't want to negotiate or you don't like it, then you should come to the table. If you're not going to come to the table, pass it.

HOST:

Well, Congressman, I'm sure you've also would have loved to have those four Republican holdouts vote for this. But you saw they did not. We saw them vote against it yesterday with the Democrats. You have a very difficult job, which is navigating the Republicans. You're the whip for Republicans in the House. You have to make sure all the votes are there. Was there ever a moment when you thought this may not get passed?

REP. TOM EMMER:



No, no. As I said for the last couple of weeks, we're going to pass this bill. No question. And again, you've got all kinds of perspectives, all kinds of personalities. I think it's a testament to Speaker McCarthy's leadership and our membership that they recognize what the challenges are for this country and for American families. And without any participation from the White House or the Senate, they had to take action. And yesterday they did a historic, historic bill that, quite frankly, they should take a serious look at in the Senate. And I would suggest if you don't want to talk about it any further, then pass the bill and protect Americans' futures.

HOST:

Regardless, something does have to happen here. And if McCarthy does negotiate a deal with Senator Schumer, with President Biden, are you confident that you can whip the votes to get that passed?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well, you've got to see, first off, the solution is there. It's already over in the Senate. They can take that up and pass it if they don't want to talk about it further. If they have problems with it, I expect somebody will call Speaker McCarthy and they'll sit down with him and they'll have a discussion. And if there are any additions, any subtractions, if they want to go forward with something else at some point, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

HOST:

But can McCarthy get the same support if the cuts that you just passed aren't in whatever is the agreement?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well, what if there are more? And you keep calling them cuts.

HOST:

But there's not going to be more. We did this, \$4.8 trillion in savings, and we not only protected things like Social Security and Medicare, we actually protected them and improved on them. By bringing people back in the workforce, you're actually going to provide these programs that people rely on with the resources to continue going forward. The only party that's showing leadership on this right now, quite frankly, is the Republican Party. And hopefully, hopefully, if there are differences, different points of view, we start to get that from our colleagues in the Senate and the White House.

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HOST:

I understand that's your point about the work requirements when it comes to Medicaid that was passed. That was part of the changes that actually Republicans made after McCarthy said he wasn't going to change it. But the idea that there would be more cuts, I mean, the White House has said that's not going to happen. Senator Schumer has said that's not going to happen. You do have to come to some kind of agreement with them,



right?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Actually, your statement about this was part of what was negotiated after is not correct. There were changes made. The work requirements. The Rules Committee was still in session until 5 o'clock yesterday morning. There were two technical changes that were made. Essentially, what you've got that came to the floor yesterday was the original bill. The work requirements, quite frankly, are Clinton-era work requirements that Joe Biden himself voted for. And you know what? This is not a Republican or Democrat thing. All this is encouraging able-bodied, working-aged adults without dependents to get back into the workforce. And if you travel this country, you know we have a crisis when it comes to finding workers on Main Street all across this country. It will protect people who need the benefits while at the same time providing an incentive for people to get back in the workforce.

HOST:

I understand that's your position. I do want to ask you before you go about something you tweeted. You said, don't let Democrats fool you. There is no such thing as a clean debt limit increase. But repeatedly, when I covered President Trump when he was in office, we saw Republicans vote to raise it without any conditions.

REP. TOM EMMER:

Quite frankly, there is no such thing as a clean debt increase, especially with this administration and this Senate. To give Chuck Schumer and Joe Biden a blank check to do whatever they want, more unrestricted, unnecessary spending that is driving double-digit inflation we haven't seen in 40 years, that is creating, I mean, spiking costs at the grocery store, at the gas pump, that would be the biggest mistake. And people have to remember, the most important fiscal reforms that we have had in the last 30 years have come with these debt ceiling discussions. So again, yesterday, Republicans and Kevin McCarthy led in the House. The solution is there. If you don't have ideas, pass it. Protect the American people and this country's financial future. If you don't like something in it, please call our speaker. Sit down with him and start talking about it.

HOST:

So when you say there's no such thing as a clean debt ceiling increase, you're saying it's not a practical outcome here, but not that it doesn't exist, because Republicans did repeatedly do that under Trump. You were there.

REP. TOM EMMER:

Absolutely. When it comes to the debt increase, we have always had spending reforms with a debt increase. So the idea that you're saying that there was some difference under the last administration, Nancy Pelosi, you might remember in 2019, said there will be no debt ceiling increase without strings attached. So let's not try to rewrite history. This is always the way it's done, and in this case, we've got a White House and a Senate. They haven't put forth any ideas. They haven't put forth any solutions. So guess what? Kevin McCarthy and House Republicans did that yesterday. If you don't have any solutions, let's all protect America's future and keep the Americans we represent in mind past the bill. If you don't like something in it, call our speaker. Come on over, have a discussion with him, and let's see what we can do.

HOST:



Yeah, I'm not saying it doesn't. It hasn't happened before. I'm saying that Republicans have passed it before in this situation. Of course, a lot of questions about where this goes from here. And if President Biden does call Speaker McCarthy or vice versa, we'll see what happens. Tom Emmer, thank you so much. Senator Whip, I appreciate you being here this morning.

REP. TOM EMMER:

Thanks for having me.

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