

# SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE

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## KENT CONRAD, RANKING MEMBER

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### **STATEMENT BY SENATOR KENT CONRAD (D-ND) ON ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOP BUDGET PROCESS PROPOSAL**

The Republican Majority simply has no credibility when it comes to our nation's budget. Under their watch, record surpluses have turned into record deficits. A Republican effort to change budget process rules now is like having the foxes change how they guard the chickens.

This proposal is really an acknowledgment by the Republican Majority that they have failed to lead the nation on fiscal matters. Since they have been unwilling or unable to discipline themselves, they are now turning to a budget process proposal to appear fiscally responsible.

The bottom line is that this proposal represents an abdication of responsibility – a line item veto that allows the President to make decisions for Congress, budgeting every two years instead of one, automatic spending cuts, and a partisan entitlement commission. If they were serious about reining in the record deficits and debt, we would be engaged in a real bipartisan effort of elected lawmakers and the President – with everything on the table.

Of particular concern, it appears that this proposal could provide a fast-track process for dramatic cuts in Social Security. That is unacceptable.

At the same time, this budget process proposal fails to include the one budget process item that has a track record of success - paygo. The paygo, or pay-as-you-go, rules were crucial in turning deficits into surpluses in the 1990's. There is simply no excuse for the Republican Majority's failure to restore a strong paygo rule in this proposal.

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