

December 3, 2012

WASHINGTON – Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) authored an op-ed this weekend in the *Savannah Morning News* calling on Congress to avoid the fiscal cliff by reaching across the aisle. In the op-ed, Congressman Barrow talks about the need to reform the tax code, control the debt, and rid the government of wasteful spending. Congressman Barrow also called for an end to the partisan gridlock that has held back economic recovery.

The entire text of the op-ed is below. Newspapers and online news sites are invited to reprint it.

Barrow: Time for leadership, not partisanship

Savannah Morning News

December 2, 2012

Congress has a lot of unfinished work before the end of the year. But if the last election has taught us anything — especially the election in the 12th Congressional District — it's that folks are tired of business as usual in Washington.

They don't just want us to get to work — they want us to work together.

Tax reform, cutting wasteful spending and controlling our debt are the most serious issues facing this country. These problems can be solved, but only if we can get beyond the gridlock that's held back our economic recovery.

Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill, Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich — these leaders were able to

put aside their differences during times of intense partisanship and come together for the good of the country. It's time for us to follow their example.

The looming threat of sequestration hangs heavy over Georgia. Sequestration is a fancy word for a policy of across-the-board spending cuts — cuts that treat the most worthless and unnecessary things the federal government spends money on the same as the most vital and necessary things we do, like providing for the common defense.

The 12th District is home to the central nervous system of our military — Fort Gordon. And we cannot treat an installation like that the same as the most useless, wasteful thing in the budget.

The most obvious reform that Congress must undertake is a complete overhaul of our outdated tax code. Every tax code has a useful life cycle. It's been more than a quarter century since we've had comprehensive tax reform, and the current code has reached the end of its useful life.

Since the last overhaul, it's been added to, taken from, and saddled with loopholes that make the costs of compliance prohibitively expensive. This in turn limits economic development.

The Republican answer is to preserve the Bush tax cuts, while Democrats want to bring back the Clinton tax rates. But both parties are wrong on this one, because both rates are higher than they have to be in order to raise the revenues that we need, and only the revenues that we need, for just the government that we need.

That's the lesson of Reagan's tax reform, and it's the lesson of the bi-partisan deficit reduction commission.

Scrubbing the current code of these loopholes, specifically tax cuts for companies that ship jobs overseas, means that all Americans, not just a select few, will see their tax rates go down.

If Congress would completely revamp the current code, tax rates on all Americans could fall to their lowest levels. When families have more money in their pocket, they purchase goods and services. This demand, coupled with lower taxes on small businesses, allows the job creators to expand their payroll, creating more hardworking taxpayers who, in turn, purchase more goods and services.

Finally, we need to tackle the nation's debt. For too long, Washington has pulled out its credit card and charged today's spending to our children and grandchildren. That's immoral, and it must stop. Just like families and small businesses all across the 12th District and across the country are forced to do, it's time for us to put a plan forward that pays down the debt and requires Congress to balance the federal budget.

Tackling the debt and balancing the budget isn't going to be easy. But I've never been more optimistic about the days that lay ahead for Congress and this country. Families across the country are looking for us to lead. They're not interested in the partisanship and pettiness that plagues the national stage.

My commitment to the folks in the 12th District of Georgia is that I won't let politics get in the way of getting this country working again. No single political party has all the answers, and neither party has all the votes it needs to do just what they want. That means we have to work together — not just because that's the right way to do business, but because that's the only way we going to get anything done.

Congressman John Barrow, D-Georgia represents the 12th Congressional District. The district is almost evenly split between Democratic and Republican voters and used to include a portion of Savannah before the latest redistricting.