

## [Raising debt ceiling still responsible thing to do](#)

Jul 9, 2011

Last week's terrible news on job growth was made a little more painful, if that's imaginable, by President Barack Obama's attributing economic stagnation to business uncertainty over whether Congress would raise the debt limit.

Not, mind you, to the prospect of business tax hikes the president seems to be so singularly focused upon.

Not to soaring fuel prices attributable to our continued over-reliance on oil imports.

Not, apparently, to the ongoing failure of leadership and compromise exhibited by the president and Republicans in Congress by their failure to lift this nation out of a worsening economic spiral.

Two years after the recession reportedly officially ended, hiring last month slowed to a near-standstill while the unemployment rate rose to 9.2 percent, the highest rate of the year, according to Labor Department figures released Friday.

More of the same simply is not going to turn a critical corner, at least not anytime soon.

Yes, the debt ceiling will ultimately have to be increased because all of the pains this nation now faces will be exacerbated if we default on our obligations.

And, as this newspaper has suggested here previously, Republicans and Democrats are going to have to accept that they possess neither the votes nor the guts to make the kinds of spending cuts alone, nor the tax hikes alone, to make an appreciable difference to our deficit negligence.

Which is why the kinds of painful, draconian adjustments that must be made now must be lasting and impactful.

Our own Rep. Mike Pence suggests, for example, that we demonstrate we have learned something from the past mistakes by both political parties by tying a debt ceiling hike to a Balanced Budget Amendment proposition that the voters in each of the states would be permitted to vote upon. Voters, coincidentally, like those in Indiana and most states have long had to operate under the constraints of state balanced budget amendments contained in their respective constitutions.

"Now look," Pence argues, "I believe if you owe debts, pay debts. We must honor the full faith and credit of the United States of America. But I also believe that now is the moment to take decisive action to put our fiscal house in order and restore the full confidence of the American people in the fiscal integrity of our national government."

Or, consider the remarks by Duke University political science professor Kyle Scott on how the governing class, Republicans and Democrats alike, have to date ignored or abused any semblance of fiscal self-restraint and discipline.

"During the financial collapse that we are still coming out of, the national government was quick to point out that most Americans were living beyond their means," Scott writes. "But so too was the government, and it still is, and wants to do so even more now, with promises of change in the future. There is no better time to change our habit of reckless spending than the present."

Yes, raising the debt ceiling is the responsible thing to do.

But, so too is enacting conditions that pay permanent as opposed to fleeting homage to political will and discipline so that we are not, in too short of order, simply bumping new and higher ceilings by our unchecked spending largess.