

Democratic Party of Lane County

2/16/23

RESOLUTION 2023.4

A resolution of the Democratic Party of Lane County

Relating to U.S. public debt

WHEREAS, the first sentence of Section 4 of the 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution says *“The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned”*; and

WHEREAS, most economists agree that there would be dire economic consequences if the U.S. government defaulted on its debt; and

WHEREAS, Congress has approved a spending bill, which President Biden signed into law on December 29, that funds the government through September 2023. This spending bill instructs the Executive Branch to fund government services at the specified level; and

WHEREAS, a 1917 law caps the level of debt the federal government can assume at a level authorized by Congress. Republicans use the 1917 debt ceiling limit as a gimmick to force concessions on Congressional spending authorizations in years when Democrats are in control. The purpose of the debt ceiling gimmick used this way is to ensure that the rich get richer, the middle class shrinks, and less help gets to the poor; and

WHEREAS, former President Trump’s tax cuts and spending increases led to a \$3 trillion budget deficit; and

WHEREAS, tax cuts — particularly those for high-income households — do not improve economic growth or pay for themselves, but instead balloon deficits and debt and contribute to a rise in income inequality; and

WHEREAS, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has announced that the U.S. government reached its debt ceiling limit on January 19, 2023; and

WHEREAS, unless Congress raises the debt ceiling limit, there is no way to follow both the 2017 debt ceiling law and the 2022 spending authorization law; and

WHEREAS, many of those Representatives who are likely to try to force Congress into concessions that will harm U.S. society supported the January 6 insurrection, and, by the language in the 14th amendment, shall not hold office as a Representative or Senator. While Congress may not meet its Constitutional obligation to bar those members from holding office, those members should not be empowered to bring substantial harm to the U.S. economy; and

WHEREAS, a 1997 law¹ gives the Treasury secretary the power to mint platinum coins of any denomination, for any reason;

THEREFORE, the Democratic Party of Lane County resolves:

SECTION 1: In debt ceiling negotiations, Democrats in Congress should not concede on issues that hurt working people, the poor, seniors, individuals with disabilities, or the environment; and

SECTION 2: The Biden administration should move forward with spending through September 2023 that has been authorized by Congress; and

SECTION 3: If Congress does not raise the debt ceiling sufficiently and in a timely manner, the Biden administration should instruct the Treasury to mint platinum coins as necessary, unless a better means of meeting the Constitutional obligation of honoring the debt is found; and

SECTION 4: We encourage Democrats to use language to make clear that the debt ceiling limit is a gimmick that should not be allowed to affect the serious business of running a nation, and that the minting of platinum coins to address potential threats of blackmail may be a necessary tool to thwart the efforts of insurrectionists who should not be in Congress.

¹ U.S. Code Title 31, Subtitle IV, Chapter 51, Subchapter II, Section 5112, subsection k.
http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/31/usc_sec_31_00005112---000-.html