

Editorial

# Republicans: End rhetoric, give results

The Republican members of the Senate once again proved their reluctance to consider a bill that could put many unemployed Americans back to work in this sluggish economy and tackle serious fiscal issues by raising the taxes of Americans best able to afford it.

The cloture vote, which would have ended debate on the bill in the Senate, failed 50-49. For the cloture motion to pass, 60 votes were needed. No Republican voted in favor of ending their filibuster and actually going on the record as supporting a solution or rejecting a solution.

If we truly need results, not rhetoric, debate has to end at some point. Debate is good; discussion is an essential part of any democratic or republican system. Our political freedoms are predicated on an ability to come together and peacefully do what essentially amounts to talking it out.

But debate has to end for implementation of any idea to begin. As any student or academic knows, there is no achieving perfection. There is no finishing a project or paper. There is only a deadline by which your work must be submitted for review. And if you miss that deadline, you start getting docked points.

The same goes for congressional action. In 2004, Sen. John Kerry, then the Democratic Party's candidate for president, stated in one of his ads, "We need to get some things done in this country." This time around, in the primary race for the Republican Party's nomination, many of the candidates tout their executive experience — from former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney to former Godfather's CEO Herman Cain — as an indicator of their ability to get things done.

Just as there is a time to every season and every purpose, there is a time to talk — to do politics — and a time to act. There is a time to propose and evaluate legislation, listening to the opinions of third parties and taking their words of wisdom into account. And then there is a time to act.

If the Republicans are indeed so eager to shape the United States and its economy with their own ideas, maybe they should propose them — during debate. Instead, several Republican senators revealed their own plan for putting the economy back to work two days after they prevented anyone from voting — from staking out a position on — their president's proposal.

If Republicans want to be taken seriously, they need not only to talk about their own ideas. They need to allow votes on the measures coming before them. If they truly want to sound like the party of the people, the party that listens to the people, they need to allow votes to take place.

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Online feedback may be used if first name and last name, major and year in school are included in the post. Feedback posted online is eligible for print in the Iowa State Daily.

NASA

# Support innovation

U.S. must support failure to bring about discoveries

**“B**eep beep beep ... beep beep beep.” Just 44 years ago this month, Sputnik beeped out a tune to millions of humans from miles above their heads. It forever changed the future of the earth and human technology — proving to people around the world that the sky was not the limit and allowing us to develop new technologies that would forever change the world.

But I'm sure many of you share the sentiment of Homer Hickam's friend Jimmy O'Dell in the movie "October Sky": "Well, big deal ... " What could a hunk of metal flying around the earth at 5 miles per second have to do with me down here?

Well, during most of the years of our parents' lives, we have become increasingly sophisticated at launching payloads into space and have become increasingly dependent on spacecraft for our daily needs.

Every morning you wake up and walk out the door, knowing whether to bring sunscreen or an umbrella, in part thanks to weather satellites orbiting high above the earth. When you drive somewhere new, your GPS computer uses 24 satellites orbiting above Earth to tell you exactly where you are and where to go. If you need to place a call around the Earth, it will likely bounce off a few satellites in between you and your destination. When you see the evening news or breaking news, some of the best reporting is likely done on location and broadcasted back to the station using a satellite up-link truck.

And those are just the visible benefits of space exploration.

One of the best things about America is not our people, it isn't our liberty or our laws — it's our culture that encourages new innovation. And I worry that we're becoming too risk-averse, that we're losing the innovative spirit that helped us invent everything from the cotton gin to the assembly line to the liquid-powered rocket.

Even NASA, an agency tasked with exploring the heavens and going where no man has gone before has been encouraged by congressmen and women to play it safe and cheap and not push too many boundaries. While even NASA officials acknowledge the need to try to use newer and cheaper methods to achieve their goals, many congresspeople want our space agency to keep paying large defense conglomerates for their 50-year-old families of rockets, at a multi-million dollar premium over their cheaper, younger cousins.

I have expressed my belief — to you in this paper, and to congresspeople in committee — that NASA's path in the future should include equal support of both new upstart space companies and 100-year-old behemoths. As it currently stands, most of the money NASA has provided to develop new rockets has gone to the old guard, while a comparatively small portion has gone to upstarts like SpaceX.

But it is still a difficult game to play because the U.S. public will not accept a failure that kills astronauts, be they civilian or government employees. Such non-acceptance of failure makes this an impossible game to play, but yet America has generated a dozen new space companies in just the last decade.

A former ISU student and friend of mine, Ben Brockert, who has worked for a few small space companies in the last five years, has many times explained to young students the importance of failure. In almost any field, if you are developing something exciting and new, you will fail many times before you finally succeed.

But during the same decades that the United States has experienced amazing growth



The Soyuz TMA-21 launches from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on April 5, carrying three passengers to the International Space Station.



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based on technological developments, we have grown increasingly risk-averse.

There is a laundry list of projects that the United States has dreamed up, started and then stopped paying for because companies and senators failed to see the long-term scientific benefits as an advantage when compared to the cost. We canceled projects like the Superconducting Super Collider (SSC) in Texas (1993), the NASA Constellation program (2010), and may cancel the new James Webb Space Telescope halfway through development.

In an age when we couldn't budget enough money toward long-term programs to stop NASA from being dependent on Russia for launching astronauts, we need to stop and examine our priorities. Do we stay on the same path, not looking out for future priorities, but

budgeting for only today? Not funding science because we are too focused on fighting terrorists around the world?

We need to focus the money of the federal government and our priorities in specific areas to keep on track and achieve a few chosen goals. To some extent, the tea party supporters are right, we are spreading ourselves too thin and counting on the government to take care of too many things at once. We should focus in on innovation, the foundation of America and support the scientific discoveries that engender innovation in our national policy.

We may not win every war we fight, but the last time we sent men out of our atmosphere, we started a decades-long technology revolution.

Do we want to relate to the other citizens of the world as a violent global police force or as a peaceful spacefaring nation? Do we take risks, make mistakes and develop innovations, or outsource innovation just like everything else? It is up to you to decide.

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Finance

# Utilizing zero-sum budgeting

**Editor's note:**

This is the final part of a four-part series on student financial health.



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**U**nlike the federal government, we as college students must actually face the reality that we have limited financial resources, and that debt must eventually be repaid. In my previous articles, I have addressed specific issues that commonly trip up college students.

Today, I am going to take a look at the greater picture of budgeting while in college.

Budgeting, which has become some form of profanity in many circles, is simply the idea of identifying, categorizing and providing funding for the money you spend during a given period of time. For college students, the period of time is most often monthly or per semester.

The benefits of budgeting are numerous. First, budgeting allows you to spend time figuring out how

before you even receive it.

In order to spend your money effectively on paper, you first list your expenses in order of priority. As college students, your first few items would be: food, clothing, shelter, tuition, transportation, insurance and so on.

You continue this list until you progress out of "needs" and end up with "wants," such as Rebecca Black concert tickets or a four-story beer bong.

After you have prioritized your expenses, you apply your money to each item in its order of importance until you run out of funds. In the above example, if you run out of money before the beer bong, you have to wait until next month or use the money your grandma sends you for your birthday for that extra special purchase. (Note to my grandmother: I have never used your generous gifts for anything of the sort).

The next step of the effective zero-sum budget is to share your plan with a trusted financial mentor. This can be a parent, adult

friend or anyone else who is not going to encourage you to sell your organs for a new iPad.

This process is intended to help keep you accountable to your own goals.

Finally, the last step is to spend the money in your budget with a new peace of mind owed to the fact that you have a plan. I have found in my relatively short time practicing the zero-based budget that it allows me to be much more confident in spending money because I know I have all of my responsibilities covered.

Whatever your financial situation in college — be it massive debt, parent sponsorship or working your own way — budgeting allows you to sit down and figure out the most efficient way to use your money.

It offers peace of mind and lifelong financial prosperity to the consistent practitioner.

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