

**CONGRESSIONAL
PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS**



July 20, 2011

Dear Colleague,

We draw your attention to the attached letter from President Ronald Reagan to Majority Leader Howard Baker dated November 16, 1983. President Reagan was a staunch conservative whose views sharply differ from Progressives' in nearly every respect. Yet, Reagan understood that the American people have invested their trust in our ability to be wise stewards. This is why President Reagan said, "This country now possesses the strongest credit in the world. The full consequences of a default - - or event the prospect of default - - by the United States are impossible to predict and awesome to contemplate."

How could we allow the full faith and credit of The United States of America to be as damaged as the credit of other nations that have defaulted on their sovereign debt?

We hope you will take President Reagan's message to heart and put what's best for America's economy ahead of gaining a short-term political advantage. Let's not hold the jobs and economic security of the American people hostage to an agenda that will only cause long-term harm to our great nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Rep. Raúl Grijalva
Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Keith Ellison". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Rep. Keith Ellison
Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael Honda". The signature is cursive and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Rep. Michael Honda
Chair, Budget Task Force

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 16, 1983

Dear Howard:

This letter is to ask for your help and support, and that of your colleagues, in the passage of an increase in the limit on the public debt.

As Secretary Regan has told you, the Treasury's cash balances have reached a dangerously low point. Henceforth, the Treasury Department cannot guarantee that the Federal Government will have sufficient cash on any one day to meet all of its mandated expenses, and thus the United States could be forced to default on its obligations for the first time in its history.

This country now possesses the strongest credit in the world. The full consequences of a default -- or even the serious prospect of default -- by the United States are impossible to predict and awesome to contemplate. Denigration of the full faith and credit of the United States would have substantial effects on the domestic financial markets and on the value of the dollar in exchange markets. The Nation can ill afford to allow such a result. The risks, the costs, the disruptions, and the incalculable damage lead me to but one conclusion: the Senate must pass this legislation before the Congress adjourns.

I want to thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent problem and for your assistance in passing an extension of the debt ceiling.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

The Honorable Howard H. Baker, Jr.
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510