

Do We Have a Deal Yet?
Press Packet

July 21, 2011
1:30pm

The National Press Club
Zanger Room

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Do We Have A Deal Yet?
Press Conference

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July 21, 2011
1:30PM

OPENING REMARKS

KAVEH SADEGHIAN, THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY (VA)

LETTER READING

TANAY TATUM, VASSAR COLLEGE (NY)

ANDREW J. FERREIRA, GETTYSBURG COLLEGE (PA)

MARISSA SERAFINO, SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE (NH)

STATEMENTS

MIKE MEANEY, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY (DC)

KAIYI XIE, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND (MD)

CLOSING REMARKS

BRANDON MITCHELL, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI (FL)

QUESTION AND ANSWER

BRETT R. HIGHLEY, PURDUE UNIVERSITY (IN)

The Do We Have a Deal Yet? Team

Nick Troiano Mike Meaney Carlos Reyes Sam Ungar Andy MacCracken
Greg Laverriere Adam Talbot Tyler Sax Matt Hoyt Ryan Schoenike

July 21, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of nearly 2 million students on 116 campuses, we write to express our deep concern about the ramifications of failing to reach a bipartisan deal to raise the debt limit.

This is not about politics. Our country and our future are in serious trouble, and the clock is ticking. Without an immediate increase in the debt ceiling and a long-term reduction of budget deficits, our weak economy will suffer even more. That means higher interest rates, fewer jobs and more debt. And trust us, we already have too few jobs and too much debt.

We urge you to work together to find a solution to this problem in an aggressive yet balanced way. We support the framework laid out by the bipartisan fiscal commission and the efforts of the bipartisan group of leaders in the Senate as a realistic basis from which to work. Shared sacrifice and common purpose must underpin whatever compromise is reached.

As our study of history tells us, big things get done when leaders of both parties do them together – from establishing social security to reforming welfare. We now call on you to find the common ground necessary to put our fiscal house in order.

While you may disagree over which party shoulders more blame for our current situation, one thing is certain – young people will shoulder the consequences of gridlock during a time that requires bold action.

Your decisions will determine what kind of country we will inherit. So please hear us clearly: It is time to put the politics aside. It is time to put the parties aside. It is time to put the pledges aside. Now is the time to do what is right for the country. As fiscal commission co-chairs Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson have said – now, right now, is the moment of the truth.

We not only face a potential crisis of credit, but also one of confidence in government. Your responsibilities as the President and members of Congress must come before your political parties' interest. In your negotiations, think about the next generation – not just the next election.

This is about our future, our education, our jobs, our families, our dreams, our country. But all we can do about it right now is to rely on your leadership. We ask you find the courage to lead. It is why you are there.

Sincerely,
116 Student Body Presidents

CC: Speaker Boehner; Leader Pelosi; Leader Reid; Leader McConnell

DO WE HAVE A DEAL YET?
Press Conference
Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

INTRODUCTION

Nick:

Thank you for coming today. Let's please get started. My name is Nick Troiano, I'm a senior at Georgetown University.

For today's press conference, we're going to start off with some introductory remarks and then proceed to reading the Student Body President letter to Washington. We will then hear from a few of the student body presidents who signed the letter. You can find these remarks in your press packets. Finally, we will open the floor to questions for the speakers.

Now, all of the student body presidents will introduce themselves.

Kaveh:

Good afternoon. My name is Kaveh, president of the College of William and Mary.

One week ago, we were a few students frustrated by Washington gridlock, worried about our future. Today, we are a coalition of 116 student body presidents representing nearly 2 million students, unified by a call to our leaders to work together and put America's fiscal house in order. Our leaders are used to kicking the can down the road. Well, we're that can, and we're here to kick back.

From Alaska to Alabama, from California to New York, we have signed a letter that urges President Obama and Congressional Leaders of both parties to reach a bold, balanced, and bipartisan deal – not only to raise the federal debt ceiling but also to seize this generational opportunity to tackle our long-term budget deficit.

The leaders of this letter represent an incredibly diverse coalition of students from 40 states across the nation. We represent public schools and private schools. We are Republicans, Democrats and Independents. But today, as we are here as Americans asking our leaders to put politics aside and put our country first.

I mean, if we were able to get Cal and Stanford together to sign our letter to Washington, surely, both parties can accomplish anything.

The clock is ticking down to August 2, the date when the United States will be unable to all pay all its bills. The stakes are high for everyone, and our generation in particular. Our future hangs in the balance. And so we are here to ask our leaders, *do we have a deal yet?*

I'd like to now turn it over to my colleagues, Tanay, Andrew and Marissa, to read the letter.

Dear President Obama, Leader Reid, Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner, and Leader Pelosi:

Tanay:

On behalf of nearly 2 million students more than 120 campuses across 40 states, we write to express our deep concern about the ramifications of failing to reach a bipartisan deal to raise the debt limit.

This is not about politics. Our country and our future are in serious trouble, and the clock is ticking.

Without an immediate increase in the debt ceiling and a long-term reduction of budget deficits, our weak economy will suffer even more. That means higher interest rates, fewer jobs and more debt. And trust us, we already have too few jobs and too much debt.

We urge you to work together to find a solution to this problem in an aggressive yet balanced way. We support the framework laid out by the bipartisan fiscal commission and the efforts of the bipartisan group of leaders in the Senate as a realistic basis from which to work. Shared sacrifice and common purpose must underpin whatever compromise is reached.

<BREAK>

Andrew:

As our study of history tells us, big things get done when leaders of both parties do them together – from establishing social security to reforming welfare. We now call on you to find the common ground necessary to put our fiscal house in order.

While you may disagree over which party shoulders more blame for our current situation, one thing is certain – young people will shoulder the consequences of gridlock during a time that requires bold action.

Your decisions will determine what kind of country we will inherit. So please hear us clearly: It is time to put the politics aside. It is time to put the parties aside. It is time to put the pledges aside. Now is the time to do what is right for the country. As fiscal commission co-chairs Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson have said – now, *right now*, is the moment of the truth.

<BREAK>

Marissa:

We not only face a potential crisis of credit, but also one of confidence in government. Your responsibilities as the President and members of Congress must come before your political parties' interest. In your negotiations, think about the next generation – not just the next election.

This is about *our* future, *our* education, *our* jobs, *our* families, *our* dreams, *our* country. But all we can do about it right now is to rely on *your* leadership. We ask you find the courage to lead. It is why you are there.

Sincerely, 116 Student Body Presidents

STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT STATEMENTS

Mike:

My name is Mike Meaney and I'm the President of the Student Association of Georgetown University.

The idea for this campaign came about from a conversation between a Georgetown bus just one week ago. We were discussing the differences between the way Washington is "supposed" to work—the "idea" of Washington that's taught in civics class—and the sorry state of the ongoing gridlock over the debt ceiling and deficit.

We asked ourselves: How come our leaders can't seem work together for the good of the country? Why do they seem to care more about the next election than the next generation? Where is the voice of young people in the debate?

Young people are often used as a political football, but we can't afford to let others speak for us any longer.

As you can tell by now, I've got a mild stutter. Public speaking isn't my favorite thing in the world. But what I realized on the bus that night is that *I* needed to speak up. *That* we all needed to speak up. Because right now, Washington is failing us and our future hangs in the balance.

Now, don't get us wrong. We don't have unrealistic expectations of what Washington is capable of doing. Nor do we claim a particular knowledge of fiscal issues that will suddenly solve the entire issue if people would only listen to us.

We are not here to tell our leaders what to do. We are simply here to tell them to lead.

Anyone who has followed the rhetoric in this debate knows that both sides talk about "the next generation" and what they have to lose. Well? We're them.

We face an uncertain economic future, a tenuous job market, and a changing American role in the international economy.

Some of these things are out of Washington's control, but one big thing certainly isn't.

We can't afford to stake our economic future on a political squabble over the debt ceiling. We can't pass up an opportunity to solve our problems because of pledges, partisanship, or pettiness.

There are bipartisan proposals out there that show us a way out, such as the Simpson-Bowles report and the Gang of Six's framework. They are bold. They are balanced. They are bipartisan. And that's why we support them as a framework from which our leaders should work.

Kaiyi:

My name is Kaiyi Xie and I'm the student body president of the University of Maryland. The students of UMD are honored to host President Obama at a town hall meeting on our campus **tomorrow** where he will be addressing the ongoing budget negotiations.

The President's upcoming event at UMD underscores the fact that the next generation will shoulder the burden of this decision. Perhaps even more, it tells us that young people have a key opportunity to go on the record about it.

When I was in 8th grade my family moved to the United States from New Zealand, where we had previously immigrated from China. We uprooted ourselves because we were looking for a country that offered more opportunities than anywhere else on Earth. Ultimately, that place was United States. What America has is precious and rare, and I am lucky and glad to share in it. What we have needs to be protected and fostered. As our country stares into the fiscal abyss, I feel a duty as a student to speak up.

Our generation faces long-term repercussions for decisions that are made now. Accessibility to higher education, our lives as working Americans, and even our long-term future as retirees stand to change based on the decisions of a few in Washington. We understand that sacrifice must be shared, but that does not mean our future has to be sacrificed. We tell our leaders that, as the generation that inherits the effects of the decisions you make today, we urge you to be ambitious in your scope and open-minded in your negotiations.

President Obama, when you come to campus on Friday, please make sure that you hear us. Speaker Boehner, Majority Leader Reid, please listen. We cannot afford to pass up this opportunity; the time has come to craft a long-term solution that is bold, balanced, and bipartisan. As a Chinese-born New Zealander and, as of 2 weeks ago, a Permanent Resident of the United States, I call on you to put aside the put aside your parties and come together as Americans, and get it done.

Brandon:

My name is Brandon Mitchell and I'm the student body president of the University of Miami.

Let me share with you some facts about students in my generation. The average college student graduates with \$27,200 in student loan debt. A whopping 85% go back home to live to their parents at some point after school. Some 17% of the Millennials - age 18 to 29 - are unemployed. And 40 cents of every dollar our country spends is borrowed against our future.

It's clear that our economy is already in bad shape. And without a deal to raise the debt ceiling and a plan to reduce long-term budget deficits, our economic future will get even worse. This is what is at stake.

Now, the conventional wisdom in Washington is that there is going to be a deal. There always is, right at the last minute. But what kind of deal are we going to get?

Are we going to get a **real** deal? Or are we going to get a **raw** deal?

Raising the debt ceiling to allow more borrowing, without a sincere effort to put our fiscal house in order, would be a raw deal for my generation. We face deficits of \$13 trillion over the next 10 years. And if nothing changes, by 2025 all revenue will be consumed by interest on the national debt and entitlement programs. This will crowd out investment and ultimately lead to debt crisis.

A real deal, on the other hand, is one that is bold, balanced and bipartisan – such as the one offered by the Gang of Six in the Senate, which reduces deficits by \$3.7 trillion over 10 years, by cutting spending and closing tax loopholes. We may each stand to lose something important to us individually, but we all stand to gain a more secure, prosperous economic future.

According to a recent Gallup poll, 44% of Americans say that today's youth will not have a better life than their parents. But doesn't have to be that way.

We are asking our leaders to get a real deal done, and we won't stop asking until they do.

You can join us by going to our website, www.DoWeHaveADealYet.com, where you can share our letter on Facebook and Twitter, and contact your Member of Congress.

We will now take any of your questions.

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The *Do We Have a Deal Yet?* Coalition

As of July 21, 2011

STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT	SCHOOL	STATE	CAMPUS SIZE
Paula Carolina Cerda	Alaska Pacific University	AK	722
Tim McBride	American University	DC	6,000
Saumitra Thakur*	Amherst College	MA	1,800
Jacob Goulding	Arizona State University	AZ	50,000
Eric Lenox	Bacone College	OK	900
Al Carroll	Butler University	IN	4,500
Johnathan Jianu	Cal Poly Pomona	CA	21,000
Adam Khan*	California Institute of Technology	CA	1,000
Justin Garritt*	Castleton State College	VT	2,000
Leslie M. Martin	Catholic University of America	DC	3,500
Michael Miller	Colgate University	NY	2,800
Kaveh Sadeghian	College of William & Mary	VA	8,000
Benjamin Quam	Colorado College	CO	2,000
Angela Cobian*	Colorado College	CO	1,900
Nathan Levick	Columbia University	NY	7,900
Maritza Diane Essis	Connecticut College	CT	1,900
Natalie Raps	Cornell University	NY	14,000
Jordan Leventhal*	Cuyahoga Community College	OH	30,000
Max Yoeli	Dartmouth College	NH	4,200
Jeanna Dacey Wilkes	Delta State University	MS	4,500
Gregory Larson	Drake University	IA	5,200
Pete Schork	Duke University	NC	6,400
Josh Martinkovic	East Carolina University	NC	28,000
Adam McCall	Emory University	GA	12,000
John Pinel	Fairleigh Dickinson University	NJ	8,804
Breyon Love	Florida A & M University	FL	13,500
Lauren Schuetz	Florida Gulf Coast University	FL	12,000
Patrick O'Keefe	Florida International University	FL	44,010
Avi Assidon	Florida State University	FL	42,000
Caitlin Meyer	Fordham University	NY	7,500
Tyler Thompson	Fort Hays State University	KS	11,000
John Richardson	George Washington University	DC	26,000
Mike Meaney	Georgetown University	DC	7,000
Andrew J. Ferreira	Gettysburg College	PA	2,600
J. Tyler Hobbs	Gonzaga University	WA	7,800
Caroline Spruill*	Hobart and William Smith Colleges	NY	2,200
Brandon Harris	Howard University	DC	7,147
Justin Kingsolver	Indiana University	IN	43,500
Corey Ariss	Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis	IN	32,000
Pat Watral	James Madison University	VA	19,000

Benjamin T. Chaucer*	Johnson State College	VT	1,800
Cody Allen Wells	Louisiana State University	LA	27,000
Nicholas Russo	Lyndon State College	VT	1,500
Kimberly Ehrlich	Minnesota State University Moorhead	MN	8,000
Matthew Lexcen	Minnesota State University, Mankato	MN	15,500
Rhett Hobart	Mississippi State University	MS	20,500
Leander Williams, Jr.	Mississippi University for Women	MS	2,500
Selin Acar	Missouri University of Science and Technology	MO	7,000
Jeremiah Johnson	Murray State University	KY	10,416
Krunal Amin	NC School of Science and Mathematics	NC	650
Michael Long	New College of Florida	FL	825
Jacob Strickland*	North Carolina Wesleyan College	NC	1,500
Michael Sabo	Northeastern University	MA	16,000
Elliot M. Echols	Northern Illinois University	IL	25,000
Jason Morgan*	Northern Michigan University	MI	9,500
Nelson N. Pugh Jr	Oakwood University	AL	2,000
Michael Clegg	Occidental College	CA	2,000
Nathaniel Goldman*	Oglethorpe University	GA	900
Ashley Leonard	Oklahoma State University	OK	23,000
Crystal LaGrone*	Oklahoma State University-Tulsa	OK	2,400
Peter Khoury	Penn State	PA	42,000
TJ Bard	Pennsylvania State University	PA	48,000
Brett Highley	Purdue University	IN	31,000
Benjamin Cloutier	Quinnipiac University	CT	5,600
Benjamin Hunt*	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	NY	6,538
Mark G. Waitkus	Saint Ambrose University	IA	3,600
Marissa Serafino	Saint Anselm College	NH	2,300
Cody Barbo	San Diego State University	CA	30,000
Stephen land*	Southern Oregon University	OR	6,700
Michael Cruz	Stanford University	CA	18,000
Olivia Ensign*	Swarthmore College	PA	1,500
Evan Nicoll	Tulane University	LA	7,000
Grant Cochran	University of Alabama	AL	30,000
James Allen	University of Arizona	AZ	39,000
Vishalli Loomba	University of California Berkeley	CA	35,000
Emily Resnick	University of California Los Angeles	CA	28,000
Harrison Weber	University of California Santa Barbara	CA	18,000
Matthew McCann	University of Central Florida	FL	56,000
Youssef Kalad	University of Chicago	IL	16,000
William L. Taylor*	University of Colorado at Boulder	CO	30,000
Ben Meyers	University of Florida	FL	53,000
Mallory Louise Davis	University of Georgia	GA	26,000
Samantha Perez	University of Idaho	ID	12,300
Elliot Higgins	University of Iowa	IA	30,000
Libby Johnson	University of Kansas	KS	28,000

Kaiyi Xie	University of Maryland	MD	26,000
Brandon Mitchell	University of Miami	FL	10,000
Lizzy Shay	University of Minnesota	MN	30,519
Taylor McGraw	University of Mississippi	MS	17,000
Eric Woods	University of Missouri	MO	32,000
Jerica Selby	University of Missouri-St. Louis	MO	16,000
Jenifer Gursky	University of Montana	MT	15,000
Lane S. Carr	University of Nebraska Lincoln	NE	25,000
Elizabeth O'Connor	University of Nebraska- Omaha	NE	15,000
Casey Stiteler	University of Nevada-Reno	NV	14,000
Matt Brockelman	University of North Florida	FL	16,500
Franz Zenteno*	University of Oklahoma	OK	25,000
Ben Eckstein	University of Oregon	OR	24,000
James M. Strickland*	University of South Carolina	SC	29,000
Joseph B. Wright	University of South Carolina	SC	29,000
Collin Michels	University of South Dakota	SD	10,000
Matthew A. Diaz	University of South Florida System	FL	48,000
Pablo L. Padilla	University of Texas at El Paso	TX	22,480
William Vitagliano*	University of Vermont	VT	10,000
Dan Morrison	University of Virginia	VA	21,000
Conor McLean	University of Washington	WA	40,000
Josh Finley	University of West Florida	FL	12,000
Riley Peterson	University of Wisconsin-Green Bay	WI	7,100
Allie Gardner	University of Wisconsin-Madison	WI	42,000
Tanay Tatum	Vassar College	NY	2,400
Nilam A. Patel	Wake Forest University	NC	4,800
Zachary Malter	Wesleyan University	CT	2,800
Jason Bailey	West Virginia University	WV	30,000
Tucker Copi	Western Illinois University	IL	13,600
Jonathon Scott Pierce	Westminster College	UT	3,300
Kaitlyn Gaddis	Xavier University of Louisiana	LA	3,300

* = outgoing