

White House press briefing [via ABC News Live]
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JACQUI HEINRICH: 43 Republican senators signed onto a letter opposing raising the debt ceiling without budget reforms, and 217 members in the House voted for that bill to raise the debt limit with cuts to spending. Does the White House consider all of those members to be dangerous, MAGA Republican extremists?

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE: Do they understand what the cuts that they are voting for is going to do? Do they — do — that's the question. I mean, Republicans in Congress, in the House specifically, voted for cuts that's going to hurt American families. I mean, we can't say this enough. 22 percent cuts to veterans, healthcare, schools, that's what they voted for. That's what —

HEINRICH: [INAUDIBLE]

JEAN-PIERRE: — and this is not — ok, but this is not — this is not just — this is — their constituents. This is what they voted for.

HEIRNICH: And the constituents that they are voting on behalf of have said that they are concerned about their retirements, about the effects of inflation, and those members represent more than half the country in the House. Those — that's the majority of — of districts in the country that they're voting on behalf of those constituents who are expressing concern where the economy is. So, I guess, how can the White House continue to use messaging and calling this the Default on America Act and — and paint this legislation in such a way without having a conversation about budget when you've got half the country saying that they want that conversation?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, House Republicans are threatening a first-ever default. They want the president to agree on a plan in its entirety that includes cuts, that includes cuts to programs that are incredibly important for the American family because they want to hold the American economy hostage, because that's what they are saying that they want to do, by threatening — by threatening a default.

HEINRICH: Their bill would raise the debt limit. They passed a bill to raise the debt limit, so they're — the conversation —

JEAN-PIERRE: They've connect — I hear you, but they are connecting passing — whatever — this debt limit, to cuts — 22 percent cuts to veterans, to seniors — that's what they are threatening — cuts to our schools. That's what the — that's what is connecting — that's what their budget plan is.

HEINRICH: The bill doesn't have any appropriations in it, actually and the — the Speaker has,

you know, ruled out a number of those things including defense, veterans benefits, senior entitlement programs. I mean, you have Mitt Romney saying there's got to be a conversation here. Is he a MAGA Republican extremist?

JEAN-PIERRE: What I'm saying is House Republicans have been very clear. They voted on a bill that will cut programs that are very important to American families. law enforcement — cutting program for law enforcement, cutting program to veterans — veteran care, cutting program to our school system. That's what Republicans have voted on, so those are extreme.. Those are very extreme. These are things that the American people don't want. Just look at 2022, what they voted for. They voted to protect — to protect their retirement accounts. That's what the American people want to see, so they're connecting those two. They want the President to agree on its entire agenda of an extreme budget. It is an extreme budget, something that Americans don't want. And, you know, that's something for them to answer to. This is — this is also speaking to — they're speaking to their constituents when they're voting for something like that. And so, look, the President put forth a budget where it also cuts spending, but not hurting American families. We're trying to make sure that we lower the deficit, by saying that we're going to cut the deficit by \$3 trillion over ten years, but he put forth something that is actually responsible. Remember, show me your value — show me your budget and I'll tell you what you value. That's what the President said. They showed their value by showing — cutting veterans program, cutting school programs, cutting health care, 22 percent. That's what they value. That's something that they have to answer to the American people about. [TO LAWRENCE] Go ahead, Ed.

EDWARD LAWRENCE: Hey, thanks, Karine. So, if cutting government spending would help reduce inflation faster, in this meeting today, is the President open to hearing other viewpoints?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, look, as you know, Ed, because you ask me this question many times, when it comes to the economy, when it comes to a priority that the President has for the American people, lowering costs for families is a top priority. He talks about that often. You've heard him talk about lowering prescription drug costs, which will — have been able to, capping insulin at \$35 a month for seniors, allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices — that's why Inflation Reduction Act was so critical and important — only — only Democrats voted for that, helped lower energy bills, another — another component of the Inflation Reduction Act. I just talked about -- he put forth a budget that's going to lower the budget by \$3 trillion over the next 10 years. And, again, I was very clear with Jacqui. They have put forth the opposite. They want to go the opposite direction. They want to cut programs that's going to lower costs. They want to take our economy hostage with the default. They want to bring back failed trickle down economy, which we know doesn't work. So, look, the President's always going to try and figure how he can lower costs for the American people. He's actually taken action and — and been able to put policies forward, pass legislation with Democrats, with the help of Democrats in Congress, sign the legislation to deal with issues that really matter to the American people.