

Fighting on multiple fronts

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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Sarah Posner is [not impressed](#) by the latest faith-based-coalition [effort](#) to prevent lawmakers in Washington from sacrificing the nation's poor on the altar of deficit hawkery:

The reason why Democrats are losing, as [Harold] Meyerson and others have [pointed out](#), is that they have relented to using the Republican Manual of Economic Destruction, which holds, essentially, that the national budget is just like your family's household budget and balancing it must become a national fetish, regardless of what the economists say; and budget cuts, not tax revenues, are essential for balancing the budget and thus jump-starting the economy. Luckily the Democrats haven't yet adopted the Alfred E. Newman approach to the consequences of a default.

Praying now that Congress won't cut programs for the poor is so far behind the curve that it's like asking that the genie be put back in the bottle -- the deficit hawk genie, which the Democrats have stupidly let out.

Meanwhile, the religious right plays the long game. . . . The free market zealots are happy to have the religious right believe that the government should stay out of God's and your (financial) business, and so are the mega-corporations and bankers profiting off the backs of not just the poor, but the middle class as well.

Yes, Obama and other Democrats have already conceded the big-picture argument on the economy: [we're talking about deficits when we should be talking about jobs](#). And it's true that the right has shored up a long-term strategy to push for smaller government as the priority that trumps all others--a strategy that needs to be forcefully opposed.

But economically vulnerable people need all the advocates they can get in the short-term, too. At this point, there's no politically plausible way around the fact that a debt-ceiling increase is only going to come packaged with deep spending cuts.

Like Posner, I'm inclined to keep shouting that the whole conversation reflects staggering concessions to small-government ideology. But I'm glad that inside-the-beltway faith-based groups are focused on what's immediately possible. The struggle for a just and fair society exists on multiple fronts, and we've got a long way to go.