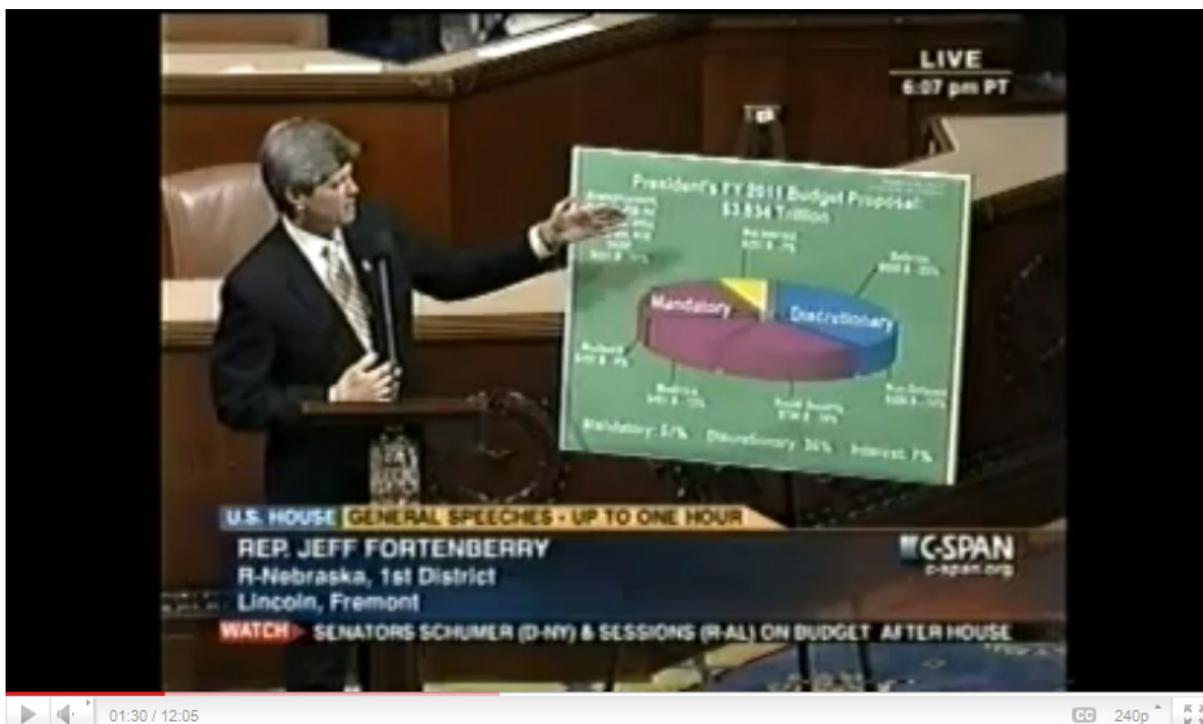


Before coming to Congress I served on the Lincoln City Council, where each year we were required to balance the city budget. There was never enough money for the ideal number of police officers, fire-fighting apparatus or amount of streets and parks improvement we would have liked. But we were forced to make tough decisions and make ends meet, just like Nebraska families have to.

In Washington, there is another reality, where for too long spending has been charged to the federal "credit card." Since 2000, government spending has doubled. The national debt, now eclipsing \$14 trillion, totals more than \$45,000 for every man, woman and child in America. On the floor of the House of Representatives, I recently gave a detailed speech on America's fiscal situation. If you are interested, you can view it by clicking on the following video image.



Efforts in Congress have recently focused on crafting responsible budgets in light of federal overspending. After a series of stopgap measures to extend government funding, an agreement that reduces \$38.5 billion in spending for the remainder of the fiscal year was passed by Congress and signed into law on April 15, 2011. In the process, a government shutdown was averted and pay for our military service members was not disrupted.

Since that time, the House of Representatives has, with my support, approved a separate, long-term budget plan that reduces government spending by \$6.2 trillion over the next 10 years. A clear objective of this proposal is to improve the economy, reduce debt, and strengthen key health security programs for the next generation while protecting seniors and those nearing retirement. While many aspects of this plan will and should be debated, I believe it provides a framework for the important discussion we must have to pursue a new pathway for fiscal discipline in America.

Many of you have contacted me with your thoughts on these and other ideas to control spending and strengthen our economy. I appreciate Nebraskans' input as we move forward in pursuing reasonable and responsible solutions to controlling spending and making key government programs more effective and efficient.