U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry believes federal lawmakers need to focus on fiscal matters before turning their attention to other issues such as immigration reform.

Congress needs to make spending cuts and debt reduction its top priorities in 2013, Fortenberry said Wednesday during a stop in Columbus, his first official visit with city leaders since Platte County moved from the 3rd to his 1st Congressional District this year.

Fortenberry, who is serving his fifth term in the U.S. House of Representatives, said he will push for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution as a way to address overspending and a national debt that's grown to $16 trillion.

"You have primarily a spending problem here," said Fortenberry.

The congressman said a vote to avoid the so-called fiscal cliff earlier this month created some economic stability, but he is looking for a broader package that tackles federal spending instead of passing an "unjust" debt on to future generations.

"We need a pathway to fiscal stability," he said.

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