

With a rallying cry of "America pays its bills," Rep. Peter Welch is leading an effort in the House for an extension of the federal debt limit without extraneous budget measures designed to use the issue as leverage for the budget debate currently underway.

In his letter to House Democratic leaders, Welch and his colleagues write, "the debt ceiling vote is about one thing: affirming that America pays its bills. It does not authorize new taxpayer obligations; it affirms to the world our commitment to pay obligations already incurred. To do otherwise, or to threaten to do so, or to leverage our duty to pay our bills to achieve a partisan advantage in budget disputes, jeopardizes the full faith and credit of the United States of America."

According to Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, Congress will need to raise the debt ceiling as early as May 16th or risk a default on the already incurred obligations of the federal government. Chairman of the Federal Reserve Ben Bernanke has warned that failure to raise the debt ceiling "would be extremely dangerous and very likely a recovery-ending event." In recent days, Republican leaders have suggested using the debt ceiling vote as an opportunity to advance their agenda. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) on Tuesday called the upcoming vote a "leverage moment."

The full text of Welch's letter is copied below. Currently, there are 47 signers, including Reps. Blumenauer (D-OR), Butterfield (D-NC), Carson (D-IN), Christensen (D-VI), Cicilline (D-RI), Clarke (D-NY), Cohen (D-TN), Conyers (D-MI), DeGette (D-CO), Doggett (D-TX), Doyle (D-PA),

Edwards (D-MD), Ellison (D-MN), Eshoo (D-CA), Farr (D-CA), Filner (D-CA), Fudge (D-OH), Garamendi (D-CA), Grijalva (D-AZ), Hirono (D-HI), Holt (D-NJ), Honda (D-CA), Inslee (D-WA), Jackson Jr. (D-IL), Jackson Lee (D-TX), Kucinich (D-OH), Lewsi (D-GA), Lofgren (D-CA), Lujan (D-NM), Lynch (D-MA), McDermott (D-WA), McGovern (D-MA), Meeks (D-NY), Olver (D-MA), Perlmutter (D-CO), Pingree (D-ME), Polis (D-CO), Price (D-NC), Richmond (D-LA), Schakowsky (D-IL), Speier (D-CA), Stark (D-CA), Tonko (D-NY), Tsongas (D-MA), Watt (D-NC), and Weiner (D-NY).

The letter is still open and gaining signatures by the hour. To see video of Welch's press conference held earlier in the day, [CLICK HERE](#) .

Dear Democratic Leader Pelosi, Democratic Whip Hoyer, Assistant Democratic Leader Clyburn and Democratic Caucus Chair Larson:

Congress will soon be required to vote on whether to extend the debt limit which, according to Secretary Geithner, will be breached by mid-May.

We ask you to convene a caucus to discuss and establish a Democratic position in favor of a clean extension of the debt ceiling.

The debt ceiling vote is about one thing: affirming that America pays its bills. It does not authorize new taxpayer obligations; it affirms to the world our commitment to pay obligations already incurred.

To do otherwise, or to threaten to do so, or to leverage our duty to pay our bills to achieve a partisan advantage in budget disputes, jeopardizes the full faith and credit of the United States of America.

Sincerely,

Peter Welch

MEMBER OF CONGRESS