

Obamacare: The Debate In Washington

Sep 22, 2013 By Anita Ramachandran



Mark areas of confusion and show evidence of a close reading.

Predict: what is this article about based on the text features?

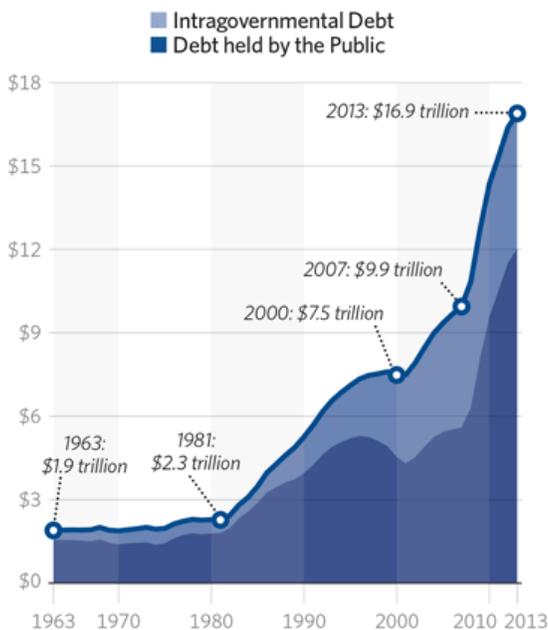
The discussion surrounding another Government shutdown has been the subject of political debate in Washington. On Friday, the Republican-led Congress passed a bill to provide a short term spending plan for the Government. It involves eliminating or defunding the Affordable Health Care Act otherwise known as **Obamacare**.

The alternative for Congress would be to increase the debt ceiling – the maximum borrowing limit, of the country and let the Government borrow the necessary funds from the market to pay its bills.

CHART 3

U.S. National Debt Approaching \$17 Trillion

IN TRILLIONS OF INFLATION-ADJUSTED 2013 DOLLARS



Source: U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2014: Historical Tables* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2013), pp. 143-144, Table 7.1, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Historicals> (accessed May 8, 2013).

The Spending Problem

Problems relating to finances have been dogging the US Government for some time now. On New Year's Eve last year, US narrowly avoided the fiscal cliff. In the past few years, the country has also had to repeatedly revise its debt ceiling to make sure that the Government has sufficient money to pay its bills.

During March this year, the Government was forced into sequestration – automatic spending cuts on all Government expenses. All these moves have been in an effort to ensure that the Government is able to operate and perform its regular duties of governance, law enforcement and administration within the funds it has available to spend.

<http://www.youngzine.org/article/obamacare-debate-in-washington>

However none of these steps have been long term solutions to take care of Government's financial problems. Come October, the US will again be scraping at the bottom to pay its bills. US tax revenues – the source of income for the Government, has not been keeping pace with its expenses. The sluggish US economy has been largely to be blamed for this.

The Republicans and Democrats differ on how to handle the crisis. Rather than put the country further into debt, Republicans want the Government to cut spending especially on programs that they see as unnecessary. One of which is Obamacare.

ObamaCare

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has never been popular with Republicans. Many believe that Government should not interfere in the personal decisions of individuals, that the Act overreaches, is unconstitutional and expensive. However, when persons without coverage seek medical treatment, cost of unpaid emergency care has to be borne by the government and ultimately by taxpayers. Compulsory medical coverage assures every person an equal right to medical treatment.

The ACA is expected to go into law on October 1, 2013. Republicans view this opportunity as a final chance to overthrow the ACA. They have voted in the Congress, but to become law, it still requires the approval of a Democrat-controlled Senate and signature of the President. President Obama has threatened to veto the proposals if ACA is defunded.

Should Obamacare be defunded to pay for a short term solution to the Government's finances? Is the Debt of the US too much? What are your thoughts?

In a ½ page response, answer the questions posed by the author in the last paragraph (above).