



PRESS RELEASE

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New Online Tool Puts Budget Pen in Hands of Voters as 2012 Deficit Tops \$1 Trillion

Nonpartisan budget simulation game educates and engages voters in budget process

(Washington, D.C.) As the presidential candidates travel the country campaigning on the tax policies and programs they each support, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office reports that the federal budget deficit through August topped out at more than a trillion dollars. Today a new Internet tool called the Federal Budget Challenge (www.federalbudgetchallenge.org) puts the power of the budget pen and the responsibility to reduce deficits in the hands of voters.

Created by the nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations Next 10 and The Concord Coalition, the Federal Budget Challenge looks out over the next 10 years, and shows some of the many different fiscal policy options available to elected officials. For example, the game allows players to decide how they would handle the upcoming “fiscal cliff” -- would they extend some or all of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts? Would they maintain strict caps on spending?

“This generation has been presented with significant challenges that we must begin to solve,” said Robert Bixby, executive director of The Concord Coalition. “The Federal Budget Challenge allows us to examine areas such as health care costs, taxes, education spending, and defense spending, and allows Americans to become a part of the conversation about the tough choices facing our country.”

The online Federal Budget Challenge prompts users to ask themselves important questions about America’s future:

- Which tax and spending policies will spark job creation and lower the national debt?
- How can we support business innovation?
- Can we meet our infrastructure needs?
- How will we increase our economic growth, protect the environment, and keep America safe?
- How can we secure Social Security and Medicare for future generations
- What should our priorities be for distributing our scarce federal budgetary resources?

In creating their own budget online, users can choose any number of policy options, most taken from Congressional Budget Office projections. As users consider these



difficult choices, the Federal Budget Challenge will show them how their decisions impact the federal budget deficit over the next 10 years. Each policy option also includes detailed nonpartisan background information along with supporting and opposing arguments so that users can make informed decisions.

“Solving the deficit requires spending and tax choices that will affect us all, and the choices we have in front of us are not easy,” said Next 10 Founder F. Noel Perry. “We want Americans to make informed choices and become empowered to play a role in this important democratic process.”

The Federal Budget Challenge is based on The Concord Coalition’s Principles and Priorities budget exercise, which has been used in numerous town hall meetings across the country by members of Congress from both parties, as well as in hundreds of high school and college classrooms. The Budget Challenge platform was originally developed in 2005 by Next 10 for the state of California.

The new online Challenge has been revamped since it first launched in 2009. The new Challenge features interactive social networking tools and touch-screen capability, along with an updated design. Users can now take the Challenge as a group and send their results to friends.

Over the long term, our country faces an unsustainable mismatch between the federal government's spending commitments and what it is projected to take in through taxes. Now, Americans outside of Washington can consider projected deficits over the next 10 years and possibly get the nation’s fiscal house in order.

The updated Federal Budget Challenge is available online at www.federalbudgetchallenge.org.

Web Editors: Federal Budget Challenge graphics are available upon request.

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Next 10 is an independent, nonpartisan organization focused on innovation and the intersection of the economy, the environment, and quality of life issues for all Californians. Next 10 funds research by leading experts on complex state issues. www.next10.org

The Concord Coalition is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to educating the public about the causes and consequences of federal budget deficits, the long-term challenges facing America’s unsustainable entitlement programs, and how to build a sound foundation for economic growth. www.concordcoalition.org