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Letter to the Editor: News & Advance

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Letters to the Editor for Saturday, March 19, 2011

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Warner's budget sincerity debated

Warner showing leadership

The Republicans are applauding themselves for passing a bill that cuts \$61 billion in spending from the federal budget. While that's nice to see, since we're overspending by \$1.4 trillion a year, \$6 billion covers only about a day and a half of debt.

President Barack Obama's a likely shoo-in for re-election next year, yet far be it from him to make any tough economic decisions before then that could alienate any voters. Let the Republicans make those calls so that his machine can hammer them for their supposed cruelty in their desire to balance the budget.

We can read online that the White House Office of Management and Budget estimates (in Table S-4) that mandatory spending this year (2011) will be \$2.194 trillion, while total federal receipts will be \$2.174 trillion. An author pointed out the significance of that by saying we're at a point "where if national defense, interstate highways, national parks, homeland security and all other discretionary programs somehow became absolutely free, we'd still have a budget deficit." This is presidential leadership?

For Democratic leadership in the U.S. Senate, Harry Reid doesn't want to even talk about Social Security reform for another 20 years, even though we can read how surpluses have been spent and replaced with IOU's. Maybe after the election's over and the ads have been run criticizing Republicans for Social Security reform?

The New York Times reported in March of 2010 how Social Security was paying out more than it takes in. Factcheck.org reported in February of this year that Social Security ran a \$37 billion deficit last year and is projected to run a \$45 billion deficit this year, and more red ink every year thereafter.

Too bad the Democratic leader in the U.S. Senate isn't Virginia's own Sen. Mark Warner, who's working with Republican Sen. Saxby Chambliss in an attempt at real deficit reform. I fear their efforts, modest though they may be, will be little more than discussion and theory with the current Democrat management and not, dare I say, change we can believe in.

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