Editor:

In last Sunday’s editorial, “Heller and Amodei made Washington work worse,” the *Reno Gazette-Journal* made the case to keep the status quo in Washington. In a puzzling move, the *Gazette-Journal* suggested that doing anything other than increasing our nation’s debt by $1.1 trillion is irresponsible – a debt that has already peaked at $17 trillion.

Such an argument begs the question, how much debt is enough? If a $17 trillion debt isn’t enough to tell the government to stop overspending, is $20 trillion? Is a $25 trillion debt the point when this paper will demand more from their representatives in Washington than easy votes and short-term solutions? What about when our nation is facing a $30 trillion debt? Is the solution always to raise the debt without any conditions or without any path forward to fiscal solvency?

Economic brinkmanship has already become the norm in Washington, D.C., an unfortunate fact resulting from backdoor negotiations and last-minute so-called deals. The process of regular order -- passing a long-term budget and all twelve appropriations bills – has not occurred for years. But according to the *Gazette-Journal*’s argument, elected officials should simply vote for whatever deal is struck.

I think Nevadans deserve better. The final package to end the shutdown was no “deal.” It was yet another short-term spending bill that offered no reforms and no path forward to ensure that the government does not shutdown yet again. It was the result of hardball negotiation tactics designed to solicit the very argument which the *Gazette-Journal* made. And unless papers like this one demand better, such a pattern will continue.

Of course, I have no desire to see the government close. I want Congress make tough decisions and do what is necessary to put our fiscal house in order. Bipartisan solutions are needed. On numerous occasions, I have asked my colleagues to allow for a vote on the bipartisan Simpson-Bowles proposal. While I do not agree with every idea in that plan, I believe that permitting Members of Congress to debate these ideas and amend them as necessary may nable Congress to pass a plan that reduces our debt, sets our nation’s priorities, and establishes a path forward for responsible budgeting in the future.

The fact of the matter is that Washington politicians won’t allow that to happen because that proposal requires Congress to go on record and make difficult choices. And so, Congress will continue to pass short-term spending bills forced through Congress at the last minute.

If nothing changes, either our nation’s ever-increasing debt or rampant inflation will crush our economy. Isn’t it ok to expect better?

The *Reno Gazette-Journal* is well-positioned to condemn Washington’s spending behavior. I have had many conversations with individuals who read this paper, and I have found that both Democrats and Republicans agree Washington must change. But instead, in Sunday’s editorial, this paper provided its readers a disservice by choosing to defend the Washington D.C. status quo.