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, *forcing future generations to pay it off?*

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.

*The futures of our children and grandchildren are relying on Washington D.C.’s ability to make difficult decisions right now*. Unfortunately, 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. 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 to make tough decisions and do what is necessary to put our fiscal house in order and stop saddling future generations with enormous amounts of debt.*  Bipartisan solutions are needed, which is why I have asked my colleagues to allow a vote on the bipartisan Bowles-Simpson proposal on numerous occasions. 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 enable 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. *I will remain skeptical of any plan that raises our nation’s credit card in the absence of any long-term solutions because I believe Nevadans deserve 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 an editorial that one might expect in the New York Times,* this paper provided its readers a disservice by choosing to defend the Washington D.C. status quo.