E t to the NEWS
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REDUCE TAXES NOW

One of the peculiarities of the press is its persistent passion to pigeonhole every politician or proposal under the label liberal or conservative. Brand names are useful if you are selling automobiles or canned goods, but they are more hurtful then helpful to political debate. Many liberals and conservatives combine for good goals, and likewise many liberals and conservatives combine for not-so-worthy goals.

The Nobel prize-winning economist Dr. Milton Friedman recently provided new grist for the case against ideological labeling when he spoke out about how liberals and conservatives both share the blame for the increasing amounts of our hard-earned money that the Federal Government drains out of our pockets.

He doesn't let any fraternal feeling for fiscal conservatives inhibit his stinging criticism of their self-defeating strategy. He gives them a good lesson in the political facts of life.

Dr. Friedman says that the fiscal conservatives, "by concentrating on the wrong thing, the deficit, instead of on the right thing, total government spending, have been the unwit ng handmaidens of the big spenders."

Here is how the liberal-conservative financial coalition works to the tremendous detriment of the hard-pressed American taxpayers. The liberals pass bills that increase government spending. The budget is unbalanced and we have a deficit. The fi seal conservatives scratch their heads and say, "That 'S terrible. We have got to do something about that deficit."

So the conservatives cooperate with the spenders in voting new taxes to reduce the deficit. As soon as the new taxes are imposed, the big spenders create another burst in government spending and a new deficit for the conservatives to moan and groan about.

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Professor Friedman has come to the conclusion that he would rather have total Federal spending at $200 billion with a deficit of $100 billion than a balanced budget at $450 billion.

The total amount that government spends is what matters. That is the measure of the national resources that government takes out of our hands and turns over to the bureaucrats. That is the amount on which individual American citizens lose our decision-making power.

Dr. Friedman agrees with Parkinson's law that government will spend whatever the tax system will raise, plus a good deal more. The higher the taxes, the higher the spending.

Those who are spending their energies on a Federal constitutional amendment to make a balanced budget compulsory, therefore, are working in the wrong direction. They are not only not helping to curb Federal spending, they may actually be helping to increase it.

Many states have constitutional requirements mandating a balanced budget, but that doesn't keep spending by their state governments from going up and up.

If Dr. Friedman's analysis is correct, we are led to three conclusions. First, we should work to cut taxes any time we can, under any circumstances, for whatever reason.

Second, we should try for a constitutional amendment, both nationally and in the several states, to limit government spending to a specified fraction of income.

And third, we might as well stop depending on those who call themselves conservatives to solve the problems posed by big government. Until they realize that the size of the budget, not the size of the deficit, is the main source of trouble, they won't be working on the solution. They will still be part of the problem.

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