



**The Daily Dish**

# Fiscal Promises

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | JANUARY 10, 2023

I get it: The track record of Congress (including Republicans) on federal spending is pretty dismal. I get it: Votes for leadership – especially the speaker – are an opportunity to make this point and so are votes on House rules. But I also don't get it: Why can't someone make a serious but realistic demand? Instead, the proposition on the table is to balance the budget in 10 years.

Here's today's key piece of arithmetic: Innumeracy and unrealism do not add up to equal fiscal discipline.

Did anyone do the math before rolling out this clunker? Using the most recent (May 2022) Congressional Budget Office [baseline projections](#), balancing the primary (non-interest) deficit would mean cutting overall spending nearly 20 percent (17 percent, actually) below the current projected levels. Eliminating nearly one in every five dollars is a whole lot more than a little belt-tightening.