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**CRFB Praises the President for Entering Budget Discussion
April 13, 2011**

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget praises President Obama for joining the discussion on how to deal with the nation's mounting deficits and debt. Today, the President offered a broad framework that is both serious and balanced. Without presidential leadership, it would be impossible to have a serious national discussion about how to change our nation's fiscal course.

"It is great that the President laid out a broad proposal for bringing down deficits and debt," said Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. "The White House is showing the courage needed to look at each area of the budget, and has now elevated deficit reduction to the top issue for lawmakers to work on together. The need to increase the debt ceiling in a responsible way that helps move us toward enacting a complete plan to reduce our deficits is quickly approaching. It is thus extremely important that this discussion get underway."

The President's proposal calls for \$4 trillion in deficit reduction over twelve years while the Fiscal Commission proposed about the same amount over nine years. To achieve those savings, the President called for much larger savings from defense and non-defense discretionary spending, health care spending, and other mandatory programs than he proposed in his FY 2012 budget. The President also called for tax reform that reduces tax expenditures, cuts tax rates, and also lowers the deficit.

"It is extremely encouraging to have the President joining the discussion," added MacGuineas. "But the plan itself contains less in savings than the White House Fiscal Commission recommended, which we look at as the minimum of what is needed to reassure credit markets and get our debt levels back on track. Still, it is a bold and serious plan, and his call for high-level negotiations is very encouraging."

"We are also pleased to see the President propose a trigger mechanism to help enforce a declining debt path, echoing calls made by the Peterson-Pew Commission on Budget Reform. Importantly, the President set the stage for a bipartisan discussion culminating in a debt reduction agreement by June. Members of Congress and the White House should work together now to develop something even more aggressive than what is being proposed here. The luxury of time is not on our side."