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Davis, Steele, Rendell, Gregg Call on Debates Requiring Specifics from Obama, Romney on Debt Reduction

Washington, D.C. - August 2, 2012 - Former Clinton White House Counsel Lanny J. Davis, Republican National Chair Michael Steele, Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell and New Hampshire Senator Judd Gregg released a letter sent to the Presidential Debate Commission, calling on the Commission to require President Obama and Governor Romney to "offer specific, documented, and comprehensive solutions" to reducing by at least \$4 trillion over a ten year period "America's unsustainable national debt."

In their letter to Commission co-chairs Frank Farenkopf and Michael McCurry, Davis and Steele praised a similar position from a bipartisan group of four U.S. Senators. Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Joseph Lieberman (ID-CT) and Mark Pryor (D-AR), asked the Commission to set aside one of the three debates to focus on proposals of President Obama and Governor Romney to reduce the debt, calling this a "moral" issue facing the nation.

Both the letters add momentum to a growing movement calling for a presidential debt debate, with thousands of Americans signing the "Debate the Debt" petition at <http://debatethedebt.org/>. Debate the Debt is an initiative of the Fix the Debt campaign, which is co-chaired by former Gov. Ed Rendell and former U.S. Senator Judd Gregg. The mission is to bring Americans together to address the debt in a comprehensive manner.

Davis, Steele, Rendell and Gregg insist both presidential candidates be asked if they endorse all the elements of Simpson-Bowles, or to explain in realistic terms "How to achieve a \$4 trillion debt reduction over the next 10 years?"

ABOUT US: "Purple Nation Solutions" is a bipartisan strategic communications and public affairs firm founded by former White House special counsel and legal crisis management expert Lanny J. Davis and former RNC chairman and Lt. Gov. of Maryland Michael Steele. The Campaign to Fix the Debt is a non-partisan movement to put America on a better fiscal and economic path.

View a copy of the letter: <http://www.purplenationsolutions.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Letter-to-Presidential-Debates-Commission.pdf>



August 1, 2012

Frank J. Farenkopf, Jr. and Michael D. McCurry
Co-Chairmen, Commission on Presidential Debates
1200 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Suite 445
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Farenkopf and Mr. McCurry:

We support the bipartisan letter sent to the Presidential Debate Commission publicly released today by Democratic Senators Joseph Lieberman (Conn.) and Mark Pryor (Ark.) and Republican Senators Lindsey Graham (S.C.) and Saxby Chambliss (Ga.). The letter asks the Commission to dedicate one of the three debates sponsored by the Commission to address the serious issue of America's unsustainable national debt.

This letter is consistent with the goals expressed by the distinguished bipartisan group comprised of American political and business leaders called "Debate the Debt" that has gained the support of thousands of Americans.

We are writing as Democrats and Republicans, liberal and conservatives, not only to support this focus on the national debt during one of the three debates, but also, to ask the Debate Commission to require the presidential candidates to offer specific, documented, and comprehensive solutions to this critical issue.

We recognize that some of us are supporting President Obama for reelection and some Governor Romney to replace him. Many of us disagree on a variety of issues. But we all agree on one thing: The \$16 trillion national debt, which is growing at an unsustainable pace, is "one of the great moral issues and threats facing our nation."

Of particular concern is how we continue to use borrowed money to pay for the current spending obligations of the federal government -- only to pass on the obligation to repay this debt to our children, our grandchildren, and their children. It is, as the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy used to say about turning your face away from moral obligations, unacceptable.

As preparations begin for the upcoming presidential debates, we believe it would be a national service for the Debate Commission to ask each presidential candidate to answering the following questions:

- (1) What specific and concrete steps are you prepared to take to reduce the national debt by at least \$4 trillion over the next ten years with those savings documented and scored by the Congressional Budget Office?



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- (2) Are you willing tonight to embrace ALL of the bipartisan recommendations of an across-the-board approach, such as the principal elements of the Presidential National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and reform, otherwise known as “Simpson-Bowles,” that would require Congress to enact legislation that would include:
1. substantial cuts in domestic and defense spending;
 2. comprehensive tax reform which reduces individual and corporate tax rates and reduces the deficit in a progressive manner by eliminating and scaling back tax loopholes;
 3. reforms to make Social Security sustainably solvent/financially sound for the long term through progressive reductions in future benefits, gradual increase in eligibility age and increased revenues while strengthening poverty protections; and
 4. reforms to achieve substantial savings in Medicare and other federal health savings in the near term and limiting long term growth of federal health spending.
- (3) If the answer is not a categorical “yes” to all four elements of Simpson-Bowles, then which ones specifically are you not willing to support and explain why – and then explain how you would achieve at least the \$4 trillion reduction over the next ten years in the national debt, scored by the Congressional Budget Office, without endorsing all four elements?

Each generation is tasked to create a legacy for the next generation to access the American Dream. Those who came before us made our dreams possible. Their efforts are why you and I can pursue our dreams today. Now, we have the responsibility to do the same thing for this generation. Our presidential nominees should at least tell us how.

Sincerely,

Lanny J. Davis
Former Special Counsel,
to President Bill Clinton
Purple Nation Solutions

Michael S. Steele
Former Chairman,
Republican National Committee
Purple Nation Solutions

Governor Edward G. Rendell
Former Governor of Pennsylvania
Co-Chair of the Fix the Debt
Campaign Steering Committee

Senator Judd Gregg
Former Senator of New Hampshire
Co-Chair of the Fix the Debt
Campaign Steering Committee