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With Conventions Out of the Way, It's Time for Leaders to Lead

Campaign to Fix the Debt Statement from co-chairs Senator Judd Gregg and Governor Ed Rendell

The past two weeks of political conventions included acknowledgment of the need to address the burgeoning national debt, but little substance on a feasible approach for doing so. With Congress returning from recess next week, Members of both parties should be working to lay the groundwork for the enactment of a comprehensive debt reduction package to replace the abrupt, automatic spending cuts and tax increases scheduled at year's end.

The consequences of inaction are clear. According to the Congressional Budget Office and other independent analyses, going over the "fiscal cliff" would throw the economy into a double-dip recession. Simply enacting a short-term solution or continuing current policies would leave the debt on an unsustainable upward path and do nothing to alleviate uncertainty that is already causing businesses to delay hiring and hold back investments in research and innovation.

Instead, policymakers must come together to agree on a plan which replaces the abrupt and mindless fiscal cliff policies with a gradual and thoughtful plan to put the debt on a downward path.

We understand that campaign politics is unavoidable this time of year, but this problem is too large and too important to put on hold until after the election. Policymakers must begin working now to lay the groundwork for the ultimate solution.

Rhetoric won't fix the debt, action will.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB), is available for comment on the above and national debt issues. Please contact Sam Hiersteiner at shiersteiner@qpgdc.com.