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CARFA Act Provides Alternative to Flawed (and Failed) Conrad/Gregg Commission Proposal

Senate rejects flawed Conrad-Gregg commission proposal, GOP Senators to rally behind alternative

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the U.S. Senate rejected the Conrad/Gregg bipartisan tax and spending “reform” commission amendment to the bill to increase the Federal debt ceiling at a vote of 46-53. As written, the Conrad/Gregg proposal would have led to a guaranteed tax increase. Meanwhile, Sen. Mitch McConnell will be offering an alternative amendment to this bad deal for taxpayers – the so-called “CARFA Act,” which would establish a commission that would focus exclusively on spending, and is modeled after the successful Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC).

The BRAC process, put in place by Congress in 1990, led to the successful closure of military bases that were underused in the wake of the Cold War, and has consequently helped to streamline military spending. Proponents argue that there is no reason this successful model could not be applied to all of the rapidly expanding federal agencies and programs.

“In light of the challenges we’re facing, it is understandable that Members of Congress are concerned about the ever-increasing debt and are looking to address it. However there is a right way, and a wrong way to do it. Thankfully, the Senate has rejected the Conrad-Gregg commission – which would have been the wrong course of action.” says Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“The CARFA Act, which has enjoyed bipartisan support in the past, addresses the root cause of our current fiscal crisis – excessive government spending, without running the risk of increasing the burden on taxpayers by raising taxes.”**

A BRAC-style spending-only commission has a historic precedent in the World War II so-called “Byrd Committee.” The Joint Committee on Reduction of Non-essential Federal Expenditures was a joint-House-Senate committee set up with the goal of eliminating nonessential expenditures.

“I commend the Senate GOP for putting forth a proposal that rejects the notion that tax increases should be part of the solution to our problems, and takes them off the table.” continued Norquist. **“The BRAC commission would not have worked if it had been tasked with either closing unnecessary bases or raising taxes to pay for unnecessary bases. It worked because it had one job: to save taxpayer money by closing unnecessary bases, and that’s the model we should follow now. Taxpayers would be well-served if Congress rallied behind the CARFA Act.”**

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all tax increases. The Center for Fiscal Accountability, a project of Americans for Tax Reform, seeks to shed a light on government expenditures, and to promote transparency, accountability, and restraint in government finance. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact John Kartch at (202) 785-0266 or by email at jkartch@atr.org.

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