



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 28, 2007

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***NEW YORK TIMES* COLUMNIST DAVID BROOKS PRAISES COOPER-WOLF FISCAL REFORM BILLS**

“Commission with teeth” could break through “Mardi Gras rules” of Washington spending

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In today’s *New York Times*, columnist David Brooks bemoans Washington budget trickery, singling out legislation by Congressmen Jim Cooper (D-TN) and Frank Wolf (R-VA) and Senators Kent Conrad (D-ND), Judd Gregg (R-NH) and George Voinovich (R-OH) as an exception to the status quo.

Of the country’s current path to fiscal disaster, Brooks writes, “The facts are indisputable, and everybody agrees abstractly that something really must be done. But then the conversation is over and most people are relieved to slip back into a different reality.”

Brooks describes the “Mardi Gras rules” of Washington spending, writing that “The Mardi Gras norms are built on a fiction — that the current budgetary path is sustainable — and once you enter that fiction, then all sorts of other fictions become necessary and trickery piles upon trickery until all the standards of behavior are turned upside down.”

Finally, Brooks praises efforts to solve the problem, describing the bipartisan “commission with teeth” advocated by Cooper, Wolf, Conrad, Gregg and Voinovich: “The commission probably couldn’t control underlying health care costs, which are driving all this. But it would at least define deviancy upward, and puncture the Mardi Gras rules.”

The full article is available at
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/28/opinion/28brooks.html>.

The bipartisan SAFE Commission Act (H.R. 3654), which was introduced this week with support from U.S. Comptroller General David Walker, the Concord Coalition, the Brookings Institution, the Heritage Foundation and the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, currently has 15 cosponsors.

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