

EW RISINGER

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Week 4

Budget Accountability — The People's Money, The People's Business

"Every dollar. Every program. Every year. The 8-year goal: cut the national debt in half."

1. The Problem

The national debt has passed \$40 trillion and is growing at \$7.91 billion per day — \$91,549 per second. Annual interest payments now exceed \$1.1 trillion — more than the entire defense budget, exceeded only by Social Security. The federal government spent \$4.9 trillion in the first 8 months of FY2026 while collecting only \$3.66 trillion. The GAO identifies \$175-200 billion in waste annually in findings Congress routinely ignores. The federal government has never been required to justify a single dollar of spending before it is appropriated because nobody built the mechanism that forces it to.

2. The Governing Principle

The federal government is not exempt from accountability because it is the government. It is subject to the highest standard of accountability because it is the people's government spending the people's money. A rancher in Nebraska justifies every dollar he spends. A small business owner justifies every dollar. The federal government justifies nothing because nobody built the mechanism that forces it to. That ends. If you want to spend the people's money you must be able to state why. Every dollar. Every program. Every year. And the 8-year governing goal is clear: we are attempting to cut the national debt in half.

3. The Specific Policy

The \$40 Trillion Clock

Metric	Amount
Total national debt (September 2026)	\$40+ trillion
Growth rate per day	\$7.91 billion
Growth rate per hour	\$329.6 million
Growth rate per minute	\$5.5 million
Growth rate per second	\$91,549

Annual interest payments (FY2026)	\$1.1+ trillion
Interest as share of federal outlays (FY2026)	13.95%
Interest as share of federal outlays (FY2028 projected)	14.94%
Debt per American	\$116,480
Debt per household	\$295,494
Annual deficit (FY2026 projected)	\$1.8+ trillion
8-year governing goal	Attempt to cut national debt in half

Penn Wharton Budget Model: policymakers have approximately 20 years to implement fiscal changes before available options become significantly more costly. "As soon as capital markets start believing that Congress will never get its act together, things unravel immediately." — Kent Smetters, Penn Wharton Budget Model. Twenty years is exactly two presidential terms from 2028. This is not a future generation's problem. It is this election's problem.

Zero-Based Budgeting — The Same Standard Every American Is Held To

- **Zero-based budgeting on a rolling 5-year schedule:** the default is zero, not last year's number plus inflation. Every agency justifies every dollar it requests from scratch — one-fifth of the federal budget reviewed per year so every program is reviewed once per term.
- **Automatic consequences for programs that fail justification:** funding reduced 25% in Year 1, 50% in Year 2, and eliminated in Year 3 unless Congress votes to save them publicly. Every member who votes to save a failing program goes on the public record explaining why.
- **GAO findings acted on:** the GAO has identified \$175-200 billion in waste annually for decades. Under Week 4 the Audit Commission has authority to compel action on GAO findings within 180 days. Ignoring the GAO is no longer an option.

Independent Audit Commission and Public Accountability

- **Independent Audit Commission — statutory, non-partisan, with subpoena power:** fixed terms, insulated from political pressure, full access to every agency's books. Commission findings trigger automatic budget consequences. Congress must vote publicly to override them.
- **5-year automatic sunset on all discretionary programs:** every program expires unless Congress reauthorizes it with a demonstrated performance record. The burden is on the program to prove it should continue.
- **Real-time public spending dashboard:** every dollar of unclassified federal discretionary spending visible within 30 days. National debt clock updated daily — \$91,549 per second visible to every American. What every program costs, what it claims to produce, and what it actually produces.

The 8-Year Governing Goal — Attempting to Cut the National Debt in Half

The platform is honest about what we are attempting and what it requires. Version A generates \$1.9-2.1 trillion per year in additional revenue. After funding the platform's new spending commitments, the surplus goes to debt principal reduction. At an average net surplus of \$500 billion-\$1 trillion per year over 8 years, attempting to cut \$20 trillion off the national debt is mathematically within reach — but it

requires Congress to act, collections to hit projections, and spending discipline to hold simultaneously. We are attempting this. No previous administration has even tried.

- **Binding deficit-reduction timeline with CBO verification:** measurable annual targets verified by the CBO — not self-reported by the administration. A president who does not reduce the deficit every year of their term has failed the most basic fiscal obligation of the office.
- **Presidential travel — C-37 not Air Force One for domestic town halls:** Air Force One costs \$200,000-250,000 per flight hour. C-37A costs \$10,000-15,000 per flight hour. Annual savings: \$7-9 million. Every trip cost published publicly. The president holds himself to the same fiscal standard he demands of every agency.
- **Monthly presidential town halls — citizens only, randomly selected, questions published publicly.** All submitted questions published after every event. No pre-screening. Direct presidential accountability to the people who elected him.

4. Estimated Cost Savings

GAO-identified waste acted on: \$175-200 billion per year in documented findings. ZBB applied to the full federal discretionary budget over five years conservatively identifies 5-10% in elimination — approximately \$200-400 billion per year at full implementation. Combined with Week 1 Version A corporate tax reform: the federal government begins the attempt to cut the national debt in half — moving from a \$1.8 trillion annual deficit toward surplus, with every surplus dollar going directly to debt principal reduction.

5. Year 1 Implementation and Measurable Result

Year 1 measurable result: Independent Audit Commission established and operational within 90 days; first ZBB review covering one-fifth of the federal discretionary budget completed and published by end of Year 1; real-time public spending dashboard with national debt clock live within 60 days of inauguration; first monthly presidential town hall held within 60 days; annual deficit measurably reduced from the \$1.8 trillion FY2026 baseline by end of Year 1 — the first measurable step in the attempt to cut the national debt in half.