

How Many? How Much? Some, Maybe: A Satirical Solution to All American Problems

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\$16,607,216,503,950.75. That was the value of the national debt on February 27th, 2013. The ability of the United States to pay off this debt without compromising present services worries many American citizens. It has caused many people to suggest possible solutions: many workable, some very applicable, and some not worth considering.

Of course, in order to develop an effective plan to conquer the national debt, one needs to learn a little about the history of the national debt and how it affects American citizens every day. The national debt arose during the Revolutionary War when the Continental Congress needed to borrow money to pay for an army to fight the British. Over the course of American history, the United States has also often practiced deficit spending, in which the government spends more money than it has to disperse. The government then has to make up the difference by borrowing money from lenders and paying interest on these loans. These interest payments are of the most concern to many Americans because money spent on interest cannot be used to fund social programs, national defense, or other federal initiatives.

Because this problem affects 315 million American citizens, many solutions have been proposed. The most common methods are to reduce spending, raise taxes, or institute a combination of the two. However, the most frequently used strategy for solving the national debt is doing nothing while occasionally threatening to double all taxes and lay off Congress. While some of these methods are occasionally effective, a bolder, better strategy is needed.

Some bolder suggestions that are commonly mentioned for erasing the national debt are passing a balanced budget amendment and reforming the tax system. However, these may not be the most effective possible resolutions. In the event of a major disaster, the government needs to have money available immediately to start rescuing and helping people save their lives, their pets, their possessions, and their pets' possessions. Also, trying to pass an effective tax reform bill to eliminate all the loopholes would cause many loophole-hunting lawyers to lose their jobs, who would then be forced to spend their time actually being lawyers in court to defend or prosecute accused criminals. If not in the courtrooms, these lawyers would be unemployed, therefore, not paying taxes as a futile form of vengeance. Perhaps their skills could be best utilized to write anti-loophole language for legislators.

To find the best solution to the national debt, one only needs to ask anyone what the number 1,000,000,000,000 is. If that anyone were an American, the response would be one trillion, but if that anyone were a European, the response

would be one billion. Since this is the case, what would prevent anybody from saying the number is one million, twenty-six, a lot, or more money than the average thief could steal from a bank teller in 30 seconds? Nothing, nothing, nothing at all! In fact, American educators as a whole should cease even **teaching** numbers and should even eliminate mathematics entirely from every single person's life. Some people already ignore the problem of the national debt, but it would be even better if no Americans even understand what the national debt is, let alone what numbers mean.

While some people may say that this solution sounds a little extreme, it is not. If Americans continue to teach math to others but ignore the national debt, then the occasional person using all of his or her scary math abilities, such as addition and long division, might realize that there is a slight problem and thus would generally irritate and annoy everybody around him or her with these findings. This action would be positively detrimental to the national psyche and would not be acceptable. The only way to prevent this from happening is to not let anyone get near math with a 10-foot (3.048-m) pole. Thus, the banishment of math would solve the problem of concerns about the national debt.

Many social problems that the United States must deal with on a daily basis could also be solved by ignoring math. To start, there would be no more unemployment and no unemployment rate because businesses would hire people just for fun. Businesses would no longer care about cash flow. Unemployed people would feel less demoralized because they would not know how long they had not had a job. Additionally, even if the unemployed did not want to work, they could be given some money or even green paper with random writing so that they could buy food and not starve, all because Americans would no longer care about a budget. Dreaded losing streaks, like those of the Cubs and Yankees, would vanish because no one could keep score. Better yet, many civic problems could be solved by ignoring math. A police chief this author once knew stated, "Our town had a lot of crime and few officers. But once we started ignoring our math, we claimed our criminal activity was down. We hired somewhere between a few and a ton of new officers whom we paid by giving them big batches of money we did not want." Today, everyone thinks his town has a small amount of criminal activity and quite a few bunches of uniformed officers to help stop crime.

Many people will agree, however, that the hardest part of this plan is drawing up a timeline (if that were possible to do without numbers). These citizens must be certain that those math-knowledgeable people are not teaching others their deadly arts and are not complaining that the country is going to the dumps because this proposal has a few problems. Luckily, the only possible way to keep these math hooligans from complaining so loudly as to prevent this proposal from occurring is simple. These scoundrels will be given a very great deal of money in assorted bills, half dollars, quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies

and are to be told the money is theirs. The overwhelming desire for them to count their money will cause them to spend one or two years indoors and give enough time for the entirety of the No-Math Plan to unfold. The inability for them to communicate their results and their complaints in general to the vast “un-mathed” will reduce their negative influence on the success of the Plan. They will give up and the Plan will succeed!

In the end, without math, the United States would become a much better place because there could be no unemployed, poor, hungry people living in a country where there are unlimited funds for social and health care. Americans would enjoy boundless national security because concerns for financial needs for defense would disappear. People could relax in a country where pressure to make a deadline such as April 15th is gone for good. In addition to solving the national debt problem, it can be easily seen that social, economic, and psychological concerns can be effectively addressed by eliminating numbers and math. Think about it: is America better off with or without knowing math?