

We have a big problem. Our deficit (total debt) is approaching \$14 trillion and it is still growing by the interest it accrues alone. Worse yet, the debt holders are nations such as China, Japan and Saudi Arabia who have no interest in a “happy landing” for our future. Our nation is running on risky business and the future for our children and grandchildren does not look bright at all. It is imperative that we begin to address this problem straight up and not try to ignore or go into denial as Congress and the White House appear to be doing. We don’t address a federal deficit with a budget that goes into the red itself. Increasing the deficit does not improve the deficit. Any third grader could figure that out. We need leadership that will take us through the pain of shrinking our spending and correcting our economic plight.

Where do we go? That is rather obvious. We have to cut our annual spending. The federal government is too big and wasteful,--no debate there. We have been talking about it for decades. Let us start doing something about it. The solution lies in shrinking the federal government. The so called “good government job” is quite expendable as we correct our economic dilemma. As President Thomas Jefferson stated, “the government that governs least, governs best”. This nation was built on four federal agencies: The Departments of Justice, Treasury, Defense and State. Anything else should be evaluated for its actual effectiveness and the original four should be shrunk to necessity and remove the largesse.

The prime candidate for cutting is the Department of Education which is the most wasteful and ignorant agency the federal government has. Those of us who were educated before this agency was established in 1979 did all right. Those of us who came afterwards have been damaged on a global competitive level. The irony is that a federalized education authority has come into our local communities and trumped the advice and management of our education delivery system and destroyed what was once the pride of America: A great education system. It just doesn’t work.

The ED is weak in structure to begin with. There are only 5,000 employees which makes it the smallest federal agency. However, it is gobbling up a “lion’s share” of the annual budget. In 2009 it spent \$32 billion and \$56 billion in 2010 and the estimated portion for 2011 will be \$71 billion. But wait, it gets worse! The Stimulus Bill (the biggest boondoggle in American history) added \$102 billion in 2009; \$51 billion in 2010 and \$23 billion in 2011. That is \$335 billion in three years. What do we get for it? A third world educational system. Obviously this should be the first agency to receive a big cut, in fact, ax the whole agency. That will cut our deficit by \$1 trillion dollars during the next ten years.

As we start to look at cutting our superfluous agencies that do nothing to progress us forward but drain our money we should evaluate the four original agencies. The Department of Defense should certainly be looked at as it accounts for almost half of our total budget. We take too many things for granted with this agency.

World War II ended 66 years ago and the Korean War ended 57 years ago. So why do we still have 36,000 military personnel in Japan, 52,000 in Germany and 29,000 in Korea? Let's not forget the 9,000 in Italy and another 9,000 in Britain. The need for these personnel is nonexistent and we should bring them home and save the billions of dollars we spend on it. We must conclude the never ending struggles in Iraq and Afghanistan and cut hundreds of billion dollars from our annual budget.

As I sit here at my home work desk and come up with viable solutions to our deficit crisis, it appears to me that people, who are certainly capable of addressing this solution, for some reason, do not. Are they in denial or are they "chicken feathers without one gut"? Now is the time for true leaders to come forward and address this very critical situation we find ourselves in. It is not going to go away until we kill it. The sooner we kill it, the better the future will be for our great country. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to correct it. This world has proven to be a place for the strong. The weak will suffer and die away. I think we should decide to remain the strong. Let's get out of this mess y'all.

Mr. Alford is the co-founder, President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce®. Website: www.nationalbcc.org . Email: halford@nationalbcc.org . www.twitter.com/nationalbcc