Taking this article to heart locally, we must look at the city, county, and school budgets as entitlements and restructure the spending for the 21st century. But it will take the grassroots to move the powerful that control spending to actually invest in the most at risk children. Big pivot step, costs much less than the wars, but emotionally it is big. We owe it to ourselves to make certain the pivot for the at risk helps them move to be individually responsible to themselves for opportunity or else freedom is lost in this sector anyway.

Continuing the concept of PIVOT. Returning to the 1940-50-60's. Is it a gift or is it entitlement? Who cares as long as individual growth economics, education, emotions and ethics results. However, the corner churches are needed by the system to find and deliver 100% of age 0-6 children.

Link back to the site is http://www.usa-positive-expectations.com/Freedom.html

Tom Wolfgram 2-17-2011

The Freedom Alliance

By DAVID BROOKS

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Over the past few weeks, I've had a chance to interview some amazing people. I sat down with Bill Gates, who was in Washington to try to keep the looming budget cuts from decimating the foreign aid programs.

I sat down with scientists and university presidents who are nervous that budget cuts might retard American research and innovation.

I've received a number of e-mails from people in the early childhood education movement who are already seeing states cutting their vital work.

I've also been in touch with people at Teach for America. The line in the federal budget that helps pay for their work qualifies as an earmark, so they face an $18 million cut and the loss of 400 teachers.

It seems that as long as there is a budget crisis, I'll never be lonely. But I have to say, many of these great people are suffering under a misimpression. They assume that if they can only persuade enough people that their programs are producing tremendous results then they will be spared from the budget ax.

They are wrong about that. The coming budget cuts have nothing to do with merit. They have to do with the inexorable logic of mathematics. Over the past decades, spending in

nearly every section of the federal budget has exploded to unsustainable levels. Each year, your family's share of the national debt increases by about $12,000. By 2015, according to Douglas Holtz-Eakin, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, Moody's will downgrade U.S. debt.

The greatest pressure comes from entitlements. Spending on Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and interest on the debt has now risen to 47 percent of the budget. In nine years, entitlements are estimated to consume 64 percent of the budget, according to the invaluable folks at the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. By 2030, they are projected consume 70 percent of the budget.

When you throw in other politically untouchable programs, like Veterans Affairs, you arrive at a situation in which a vast majority of the budget is off limits to politicians who are trying to control debt. All cuts must, therefore, be made in the tiny sliver of the budget where the most valuable programs reside and where the most important investments in our future are made.

Over the next few weeks, Republicans will try to cut discretionary spending to 2008 levels and tell their constituents they are boldly reducing the size of government. That is a mirage. Anybody who doesn't take on entitlement spending is an enabler of big government. The supposedly rabid Republican freshmen are actually big government conservatives. They will cut programs that do measurable good while doing little to solve our long-range fiscal crisis.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration theoretically opposes runaway debt while it operationally expands it. The president is unwilling to ask for shared sacrifice if the Republicans won't ask with him. Fine. But he hasn't even used his pulpit to prepare the ground. He announces unserious cuts with lavish fanfare.

Since most of the budget is untouchable, the budget ax will fall on every section of the discretionary budget. It will fall on the just and unjust alike, regardless of merit.

The implication is this: If people who care about this or that domestic program fight alone, hoping that their own program will be spared, then they will all perish alone. If they have any chance of continuing their work, they will have to band together and fight their common enemy, the inexorable growth of entitlement spending.

The foreign aid people, the scientific research people, the education people, the antipoverty people and many others have to form a humane alliance. They have to go on offense. They

have to embrace plans to slow the growth of Medicare, to reform Social Security and to reform the tax code to foster growth and produce more revenue.

Specifically, they have to get behind an effort now being hatched by a group of courageous senators: Saxby Chambliss, Mark Warner, Tom Coburn, Dick Durbin, Mike Crapo and Kent Conrad. These public heroes have been leading an effort to write up the Simpson-Bowles deficit commission report as legislation to serve as the beginning for a serious effort to get our house in order. They've been meeting with 20 to 40 of their colleagues to push this along. It's not always the most famous senators that are involved in this effort. It's the midranking and junior ones who are willing to risk political ire to save the republic.

They need a popular movement mobilized behind them. They need an activist alliance so that party leaders and the White House can see a politically viable way forward.

It's not only about debt; it's about freedom. It's about whether we get to make budget choices or whether we have our lives dictated by the inexorable growth of programs beyond our control.