

The Fiscal Cliff

Community Comment
010413
Sam Pennisi

We fell off the fiscal cliff on January 1st. We had 500 and some odd days to act on the law that would raise everyone's taxes and drastically cut federal spending without regard for the success or importance of the program. The law was intended to be unacceptable to be implemented. That was done to insure that Congress and the President would be forced to enact a law that would be a better compromise. Our congress and our administrative branches of government couldn't get it done. Late on January 1st, they finally agreed on a stop gap measure that pulled us back from the cliff enough to not put us into another recession. Everyone seems to agree that would have been the result of inaction. We solved that after the deadline.

But we didn't solve much. To a large degree, we kicked the can down the road again. I won't assign blame but will assess why this happened. In my opinion, the House of Representatives has a majority whose goal seems to be to block any legislation that calls for more taxes. They also seem to want to make sure the President doesn't win on anything, whether or not it's good for the country. To their credit, they do want to cut spending and decrease the deficit. The Speaker of the House made a deal with the President that would have done some of this about a month ago but because it also had tax increases, it didn't even come up for a vote. They and the nation lost a more balanced and longer term idea than the one just passed.

The President, it seems, would have signed the legislation if enough democrats in the house would have gone along. The Senate seemed ready to agree. The minority leader in the senate, Mitch McConnell, had to be part of any agreement. It must be hard for the President to negotiate with this Senator after he said his priority after the President was elected four years ago was to make sure President Obama was a one term President.

President Obama ran on what he would do about taxes and other issues related to the fiscal cliff and won his reelection bid. I get this and I believe he should stick to his ideals. However, negotiations have to be based on give and take; on the search for reasonable compromise. To negotiate requires trust and a working relationship. The President

needs to do a better job of forming relationships based on mutual respect and the appreciation of different points of view. American politics are at their best when a good relationship exists between influential people with different points of view.

These comments are meant to encourage both sides of the isle, democrat and republican, to remember that they are Americans first. In a two party system, we need both to be included in lasting solutions. Our representatives must remember that political and fiscal stability are two of our greatest assets. Work together and get your work done on time; the rest of us have to.

Finally, to our new Congressman Jared Huffman; Please be part of the solution and don't add to the problem.

Happy New Year everyone

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.