

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy to Meet With Biden, Expected to Discuss Debt Ceiling

Republican leader says talks should include federal spending cuts to reduce deficits



Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy said Congress should look at paring back expenditures incurred by every federal department. PHOTO: TOM WILLIAMS/ CQ ROLL CALL/ZUMA PRESS

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President Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy plan to meet at the White House on Wednesday as Republican lawmakers push to tie spending cuts to an increase in [the debt ceiling](#). Mr. McCarthy, who unveiled the timing of the previously announced meeting in an interview Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation," said lawmakers should implement a plan to cut spending and lower the country's future debt load and not simply raise the existing \$31.4 trillion borrowing limit.

“We are not going to default,” Mr. McCarthy, a Republican representing California, said. “I want to find a reasonable and responsible way that we can lift the debt ceiling but take control of this runaway spending.”

Mr. Biden has said he plans to meet with Mr. McCarthy to discuss a range of issues, including [the debt ceiling](#). But the president and his top aides have stressed they have no intention of negotiating on the issue, arguing that the debt ceiling should be raised without conditions like spending cuts.

President Biden has said that the debt ceiling should be raised without conditions like spending cuts

Mr. McCarthy said Congress should look at paring back expenditures incurred by every federal department, including the Defense Department, although he added that lawmakers shouldn't cut the [Social Security](#) or Medicare programs.

“I want to look at every single dollar we're spending no matter where it's being spent,” Mr. McCarthy said. “You're going to tell me that inside Defense there's no waste?”

Mr. McCarthy said that Mr. Biden is “playing with the markets” by not agreeing to negotiate. “Does the president really believe there is no waste in government?” Mr. McCarthy said Sunday.

Mr. McCarthy and Republican lawmakers haven't presented a detailed plan for the types of spending cuts they hope to make.

A White House official confirmed that the meeting is scheduled for Wednesday and pointed to a statement issued earlier this month by White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. “Like the president has said many times, raising the debt ceiling is not a negotiation; it is an obligation of this country and its leaders to avoid economic chaos,” she said at the time.

The Treasury Department has begun taking so-called [extraordinary measures to keep paying the government's bills](#) as the U.S. bumped up against its borrowing limit. The measures will allow the Treasury to keep paying [obligations to bondholders](#), Social Security recipients and others until at least early June, giving Mr. Biden and Congress less than five months to reach an agreement to raise the debt limit or risk a default.

The president met at the White House last week with [top congressional Democrats](#), including House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, both Democrats of New York. Following the meeting, the lawmakers sought to project unity on the debt ceiling, urging Republicans to agree to lift it immediately.

“We have a responsibility to pay the debts that the Congress has already incurred,” Mr. Jeffries said.