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## Antony Davies: Give children the vote to safeguard their futures

By Antony Davies

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For the first time in history, the government lost its perfect credit rating. That we would end up here is perfectly predictable given that politicians respond to people who vote.

The problem is that 76 million Americans — almost 25 percent of our population — are prohibited from voting. I'm talking about our children — the people who will become, in totality, the taxpayers of tomorrow.

Every dollar the government borrows today requires future tax dollars to repay. Every promise the government makes to pay Social Security and Medicare benefits requires future tax dollars. Our children will pay to fulfill those promises.

Today's children will have to endure oppressive taxes and possibly extreme inflation when the laws of mathematics finally force tomorrow's politicians to do what today's politicians refused to. According to the latest reports from the Social Security and Medicare board of trustees, Social Security disability insurance will go bankrupt in seven years, Medicare Part A will be bankrupt in 13 years and Social Security retirement insurance will be bankrupt in 25 years. Our children will be at the peaks of their careers when our welfare state begins to disintegrate.

I propose extending the right to vote to those under age 18 — all the way down to newborns. Children may not be mentally or even physically capable of voting, but their parents are capable of doing so on their behalf. Parents already make most choices for their children— what to eat, when to go to bed, whether to see a doctor. Why should voting be any different?

Critics will argue that we'd be giving undue voice to households with children. But that's exactly the point — we're currently giving undue voice to households without children because those households get the same number of votes as households with children but won't be contributing to tax revenues in the next generation.

Constitutional amendments aside, the credit downgrade reflects the fact that the White House and Congress didn't avert a government shutdown; they merely delayed it. Next year at this time, we're going to have the same debt ceiling conversation all over again except that the federal debt will be \$2.4 trillion greater than it is now. No doubt, next year's leaders will kick the can down

the road again so that, in 2013, we can reprise the conversation yet again, but with a debt that is \$5 trillion larger.

Eventually, credit rating agencies or foreign governments or the market as a whole will say “enough” and the government will find that it cannot borrow more without serious ramifications — perhaps another credit downgrade, perhaps significantly higher interest rates, likely both. When that happens, our children will look longingly back on the summer of 2011 and ask why their parents’ politicians couldn’t have taken bolder steps to solve this problem when it was still manageable.

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