

# Headline English

2011, week 10 *Learn English through reading on current world affairs*

1 **Paul Krugman**

2 **Cut spending. But not on me!**

3 original at:

4 [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/14/opinion/14krugman.html?\\_r=1&ref=paulkrugman](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/14/opinion/14krugman.html?_r=1&ref=paulkrugman)

5 Republican leaders like to claim that the midterms gave them a mandate  
6 for sharp cuts in government spending. Some of us believe that the  
7 elections were less about spending than they were about persistent high  
8 unemployment, but whatever. The key point to understand is that while  
9 many voters say that they want lower spending, press the issue a bit  
10 further and it turns out that they only want to cut spending on other  
11 people.

12 That's the lesson from a new survey, in which Americans were asked  
13 whether they favored higher or lower spending in a variety of areas. It  
14 turns out that they want more, not less, spending on most things,  
15 including education and Medicare.

16 The only thing they clearly want to cut is foreign aid, which most  
17 Americans believe, wrongly, accounts for a large share of the federal  
18 budget.

19 The survey also asked people how they would like to see states close their  
20 budget deficits. Do they favor cuts in either education or health care, the  
21 main expenses states face? No. Do they favor tax increases? No

22 The moral is clear. Republicans don't have a mandate to cut spending;  
23 they have a mandate to repeal the laws of arithmetic.

## Questions

- 1) Where do Republicans think their mandate to cut spending comes from?
- 2) Does the author subscribe to their arguments?
- 3) Paraphrase 'press the issue a bit further' (lines 9 and 10).
- 4) According to the newest poll, do Americans actually want to cut spending?
- 5) Does foreign aid constitute a large part of the US federal budget?
- 6) According to the newest poll, what way do the Americans propose for closing the budget deficit?
- 7) Explain why, according to Krugman, the Republicans 'have a mandate to repeal the laws of arithmetic' (line 23).
- 8) What is your opinion on cuts in public budgets? Do you think that the situation in the Czech Republic is in any way similar to what is happening in the US? Would you agree that most people in the Czech Republic would also like the government to spend less – on everybody else except them?

## Vocabulary

**mandate** (line 5) – the right and power to carry out certain policies

**turn out** (line 10) – to happen in a particular way, or to have a particular result, especially one that you did not expect

**share of** (line 17) – a part of something

**close the deficit** (line 19 to 20) – to balance the budget, to plug the holes in the budget

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> or <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

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