

By Russ Pankonin, The Imperial Republican

Seventeen years ago. That's the last time a feud between Republicans and Democrats shut down the federal government—until now.

That time the parties disagreed on competing budget proposals. This time, the faith and credit of the United States stood in the balance as the Democrats and Republicans wrangled over the future of the Affordable Care Act.

Democrats blamed Republicans for trying to gut the ACA, commonly referred to as ObamaCare. Republicans blamed Democrats, and more especially President Obama, for refusing to negotiate on the issue.

As of Wednesday morning, it appeared both parties finally reached some compromise to end the 16-day government shutdown by funding the government and raising the debt ceiling.

Failure to raise the debt ceiling limit would have led to a government default on its debts. This would have wreaked havoc on the U.S. economy, not to mention the ripple effect on the world economy.

Although the two parties have reached a tentative agreement, all they have done for now is kick the can down the road. The government will only be funded until Jan. 15, 2014. The debt ceiling is only raised until Feb. 7, 2014.

Unless there's some miracle of reconciliation or compromise, we could well find our country back on the edge of crisis once again in early February.

Perhaps a miracle isn't needed. Perhaps Congress can just do the job they were elected for—working for the good of this country instead of advancing their party's political idealism.

Democracy can't work without some compromise. Based on the actions of our current Congress, I don't hold great hope that middle ground can be found.

Republicans aren't going to stop fighting the funding and implementation of ACA. President Obama and the Democrats aren't willing to yield on the issue. If the future of governing our nation is tied to that single issue, more gridlock will reign.

As Nebraskans, we govern in a single house Legislature through the values of common sense and compromise. I was disappointed that our junior senator, Deb Fisher, who rose from that same Legislature to the U.S. Senate, was among the Republican senators unwilling to compromise.

I voted for her to go to Washington to represent Nebraska's interests and values. I view her uncompromising stance as merely a move to score points in an effort improve her clout as a junior U.S. Senator.

Sadly, she was more concerned with her political career and her standing among Republican colleagues than representing the Nebraskan values that got her elected.

Going forward, we as Americans can only hope that our government and those who govern remember that they work for us!