We negate that the US should prioritize reducing the federal debt over promoting economic growth.

Our sole contention is fiscal sabotage.

Buchanan '12 finds that to reduce the debt by half, or $10 trillion dollars, Congress would have to run a budget surplus of 500 billion dollars for twenty years, or the equivalent of decreasing spending by 1.5 trillion dollars annually.

Due to this immense scale, prioritizing debt would decimate spending in at least two areas.

First, foreign aid.

> Ferris '18 writes, "The White House can cancel $3 billion in foreign aid even if it is never approved by Congress, and administration officials are planning to freeze billions of dollars, long enough so the funds will expire."
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> However, internal resistance has prevented Trump from going through with his plan. Wroughton '18 explains that both Republicans and Democrats in the Senate are using their limited political leverage to prevent Trump from neutering USAID, and consequently, he furthers, the administration has dropped its plan.
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> However, prioritizing debt relief would undermine this resistance and allow more extreme Republicans to cut from aid programs for two reasons.
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>> First, because Ferrarello '17 explains that the Trump administration's belief of "America First" sidelines the needs of other countries.
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>> Second, because politicians must answer the will of the people for reelection. Rampell '17 reports that 46% of voters believe that foreign aid contributes "a great deal" to government debt, whereas only 18% said the same about social spending. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs '17 writes that Americans embrace cuts to foreign aid because they don't feel as if they bear the consequences.
>
> That's why Allam '13 confirms that foreign aid is often first on the chopping block in tough budgetary times.

This would be devastating as Everett '18 explains, Trump has proposed a 37% reduction in the US aid department's budget. Khazan '17 states that if Congress agrees to the proposed cuts, that would mean "nearly 7 million people could face preventable death due to lost support for vaccination programs and higher risks of malnutrition."

The second area that will get cut is social spending.

Nobel Prize-winning Economist Paul Krugman '14 explains that debt fears would be used by fiscally-conservative Republicans to bully the nation into slashing social programs, two-thirds of which come at the expense of lower-income families.

Specifically, Elis '18 writes that Mitch McConnell's senate coalition has used the explosion of the deficit to justify sweeping cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, and prioritizing debt ensures they see this through.

Even in the face of Democratic resistance, these cuts still go through. Kenton '18 explains that when Congress agrees to set a spending cap but then subsequently cannot agree on what to cut, Congressional rules force the government into a period of *sequestration*, in which government spending is crushed across the board, proportional to current spending allocation.

Amadeo '18 explains that this happened with the 2011 Budget Control Act, in which Republicans and Democrats couldn't agree on the best way to lower the deficit. When they couldn't agree, the sequester kicked in, which cut spending by 10 percent from 2013 to 2021.

These cuts would be devastating. As Campbell '18 furthers, US entitlement spending keeps 44 million Americans out of poverty annually, and a majority of Americans depend on them at some point in their lives.

But even more-so, in addition to the dramatically increasing poverty, austerity measures mean that debt reduction itself would backfire. As the Economist, citing research from the IMF, explains, cuts to social spending have a fiscal multiplier of at least negative 1.5 – that is to say, every $1 we save from cutting social programs reduces economic growth by $1.50. This is because austerity measures reduce the disposable income of working families, who spend the vast majority of their income.

If GDP growth falls faster than the debt, the debt-to-GDP ratio *increases* – so prioritizing the debt makes the debt situation worse, raising interest payments as a percent of the overall budget.

This is why, empirically, the Wharton School finds that even though most of Europe dramatically cut social spending after the 2008 recession to bring down debt, debt ratios continued to increase.

The only solution to debt, then, is sustained economic growth. As Krugman concludes that the nation's $21.5 trillion national debt doesn't matter these days, because average interest payments are below the rate of economic growth.

Thus, we negate.