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We need to look at spending

To the Editor:

So far, my opinion piece discussing a fix to the Alternative Minimum Tax has been met with such derision from the right wing that I've been called a pick-pocket and a socialist (funny -- I never once advocated government takeover of industry). It's clear I've touched a nerve by advocating a return to a true progressive tax at the expense of billionaire hedge fund managers.

To be clear on the latest critic, John Skoufis, I never outright discredited the Laffer curve. I anticipated this would be the next argument to be trotted out.

My criticism is that while it's an interesting theory (that somewhere there's an optimum point of taxation that actually maximizes revenues), good luck trying to find that point given there's probably a plethora of distorting variables, so much so that Arthur Laffer himself hesitates to say where the optimal point might be.

By the same token -- unlike my myopic critics -- I've never shied away from the spending side of the picture.

I talked about an accountable plan to conclude our so far open-ended commitment in Iraq, and end to earmark pork-barrel spending, and to ask every citizen to take an active role in monitoring their tax dollars, instead of throwing their hands up in frustration with a "starve the beast" mentality. Just remember, the "beast" is your creation every time you step into the polling booth. It educates our youth, protects us from threats, and looks after those occasionally in need. Let's be responsible in maintaining it.

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