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زبانهای اروپایی

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## Women Won't Renegotiate Our Place in the Economy



Photograph by Nathaniel St. Clair

A lot has changed since 2011, the year I graduated high school. Tiktok was invented, there are now 12 Kardashian grandchildren, and I'm about to turn 30. But some things never change.

Back then, at the height of the Tea Party era, conservative Republicans threatened to default on the U.S. debt — not reduce it, mind you, but default on it — unless they could choke federal spending that makes the economy work better for everyone.

If you're experiencing deja vu, it's because they're now doing it again, threatening to tank the economy unless they get deep, harmful social spending cuts.

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And as we enter Women's History Month, it's impossible to ignore the impacts this will have on women in particular. These right-wing lawmakers are essentially using their old playbook to renegotiate women's place in the economy.

Let me explain. The pandemic exposed a child care system on the brink of collapse, a widespread lack of paid leave options for workers, and a gutted social safety net that left millions without food, health care, or enough cash to pay the rent.

During that emergency, we had to rapidly rebuild a foundation to help ordinary people survive the economic downturn and public health emergency that affected all of us. Thanks to pressure from grassroots organizing, President Biden's [American Rescue Plan](#) took some important steps in that direction.

For women in particular, this law was a vital lifeline.

States got funds they could use to make child care more affordable and pay the mostly-women child care workers a living wage, stabilize rents for the mostly-women workers who were laid off as businesses shuttered, and expand the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit to women who hadn't gotten them before.

Likewise, last year's Inflation Reduction Act expands access to health care and lowers prescription drug costs for millions. The [older women](#) who make up the majority of our senior population will especially benefit.

This terrifies corporations and their friends in Congress. They're threatened by the idea of an American economy that reverses our decades-old formula — one that only benefits the few at the expense of the many.

So they're weaponizing the threat of default, which really just means they're refusing to pay for or extend these policies Congress passed with [enthusiastic support](#) from most Americans.

They'll argue that we don't have the money for the [expanded Child Tax Credit](#) that largely benefited working class constituents — remember, not one Republican voted for it. But more than 70 Republicans just [introduced a bill](#) to make the Trump tax cuts for the wealthy permanent. So it's not about money — it's about who benefits from it.

Funding for non-defense programs is already effectively [9 percent below 2010 levels](#). But these lawmakers want further cuts to the federal funding that supports our child care subsidies, our paid leave, and our job training programs.

All this after the right-wing Supreme Court already eliminated women's rights to reproductive health care, which is not only a violation of our human rights but can also have devastating [effects on our earning potential](#).

President Biden has said he'll refuse to negotiate with House Republicans about the debt ceiling. And hopefully his next budget proposal will reflect his continued commitment to leveling the playing field for women.

The pandemic took us back all on its own — we don't need the Tea Party on steroids to push us even further. If these extremists had their way, my bank account would look as empty as it did in high school and I'd have 12 kids much less fortunate than the Kardashians running around.

It's 2023. As I step into my 30s, there's no way I'm letting a few old men and an imaginary story about the debt ceiling put another glass ceiling over my future.

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