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Robert Greenstein is the founder and President of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a non-profit policy institute that focuses on both fiscal policy and policies to reduce poverty and improve conditions for people with limited means. He was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 1996 for making “the Center a model for a non-partisan research and policy organization,” and the Heinz Award for Public Policy in 2008 for his work to “improve the economic outlook of many of America’s poorer citizens.” He also was the 2008 recipient of the John W. Gardner Leadership Award, given annually by Independent Sector, which said “Mr. Greenstein has played a defining role in how people think about critical budget and tax policies.... [and] help[ed] the nation address fiscal responsibility, reduce poverty, and expand opportunity.” In 2010, he received the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Prize from the American Academy of Political and Social Science, which cited him as “a champion of evidence-based policy whose work at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is respected on both sides of the aisle.”

Before starting the Center, he was Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service at the Department of Agriculture, where he directed the agency that operates the food stamp, school lunch, and other nutrition programs. He also was a member of the Bipartisan Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform (the Kerrey-Danforth commission) in 1994. He is a graduate of Harvard College and has received honorary doctorates from Tufts University and Occidental College.