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Testimony to the House Budget Committee

Congressman Ed Case, Hawai'i District One

November 29, 2023

Chair Arrington, Ranking Member Boyle and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the need for a bipartisan fiscal commission to address our nation's fiscal crisis.

Our budget is on an unsustainable path and the American people know it. Every metric – annual deficits, total debt, debt-to-GDP ratio, interest payments as a percentage of debt and GDP and so on – paints a bleak and deteriorating picture. We are placing all our domestic and national security programs at grave risk. If we do not act now, we are on track to see critical programs made insolvent and social services benefits cut.

The Sustainable Budget Act, which I introduced with Congressman Womack, can address this issue by establishing an 18-person bipartisan commission to propose policies to improve our fiscal outlook, balance the budget and achieve fiscal sustainability. The bill requires Congress to take an up or down vote on the commission's recommendations within a year after they are issued.

These are not the only possible solutions using a commission. I am also an original cosponsor of the Fiscal Commission Act from Congressmen Huizenga and Peters, and I support Senators Manchin and Romney's Fiscal Stability Act. Both establish fiscal commissions with slightly different structures and timelines.

A bipartisan fiscal commission, structured correctly, can do several things to redirect us to a sustainable path. First, it places all options on the table and provides a forcing mechanism, requiring an honest discussion about policies to improve our fiscal situation. Second, a commission can cut through the competing jurisdictions of different Congressional committees to promote the necessary big picture approach to addressing our debt and deficit. Finally, a

commission can foster a long overdue and necessary bipartisan discussion on the fiscal situation, while building consensus around solutions.

To be effective, both Republicans and Democrats will need to compromise to address the debt and deficit. Our nation's fiscal health is not a partisan issue, nor can we afford to let it become one.

It will be a long and difficult road back to fiscal sustainability. I am committed to working with you to take the first steps before it is truly too late. The longer we wait to address our fiscal crisis, the more drastic and painful the requisite solutions. We must act swiftly before our choices become far more limited by our financial straitjacket.

Thank you.