

The Honorable Kat Cammack

**Rep. Kat Cammack (FL-03)
House Committee on Budget Member Day Hearing
December 6, 2023**

Thank you, Chairman Arrington, Ranking Member Boyle, and members of the committee, for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Your work is crucial in charting a path towards fiscal sanity for our nation.

As we speak, the United States national debt is barreling towards \$34 trillion. Our window to restore common sense to our federal budget is slowly closing, and we must act before our kids and grandkids pay the price of our government's abdication of fiscal responsibility. As one of the youngest members serving in the House of Representatives today, I am infuriated. I am disappointed. I am frustrated. The fiscal sins that have been committed in these halls and continue on today, are going to be paid by me—my peers—my generation. It is Millennials and Gen Z's that will pay the steep price for the lack of courage displayed by members of this chamber. Continuing resolutions that are nothing more

than lazy rubber stamps of previous years spending and priorities do nothing to course-correct the devastating path we are currently on.

With that said, I would like to highlight three proposals that I encourage the committee to consider to restore our nation's financial health:

1. Creating and implementing a structured national debt repayment plan.
2. Realigning our budgeting process to start from zero rather than funding levels from prior years.
3. Passing a balanced budget amendment.

First, a structured debt repayment plan would be a crucial step in tackling the national debt in a systematic manner. Here is my suggestion:

First, Congress must balance the federal budget, and become a good steward of taxpayer money. Then, Congress must organize a mechanism for paying down the national debt in years where tax receipts exceed the CBO's yearly projections of revenue. In this way, Congress is not only

responsibly funding the federal government but also incentivizing pro-growth financial policies that would result in higher revenues. We have already seen the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, for example, bring average tax collections well above CBO forecasts in the first five years since its passage, according to the Tax Foundation. Using excess revenue in years of economic growth is just one prudent way to begin paying down our national debt in the long run.

Furthermore, realigning our budgeting process from our current status quo of a year-to-year budgeting process to a zero-based budgeting process is another responsible policy change that would curb excessive spending. Every year, we approach the appropriations process assuming that the previous year's funding levels are largely adequate. By making this assumption, we are neglecting to conduct top-down evaluations of government services that would make better use of taxpayer money. Instead, we are left with a piecemeal approach to government funding, where we make incremental changes to our federal budget without a

comprehensive review of which programs provide the most value to American citizens.

Lastly, as I mentioned before, we must consider passing a balanced budget amendment to our constitution. In Congress, we hold the power of the purse, and like any business, we must maintain a balance sheet where our costs do not exceed our revenues. We will have no path forward in paying down our national debt if we do not pass a sensible federal budget year to year. The current administration has already run a \$1.7 trillion deficit in Fiscal Year 2023, and without a reasonable, enforceable mechanism to bring spending under control, our country will be faced with an economic catastrophe that could destroy the future prosperity of our kids and grandkids.

I appreciate the committee's work in changing the course of our budgetary process, and I look forward to working with you all in creating a better financial future for our nation.