

March 3, 2020

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Chairman
House Committee on the Budget
204-E Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Yarmuth:

As required by Section 301(d) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-344), this letter transmits the Views and Estimates of the Committee on Ways and Means on those aspects of the Federal budget for Fiscal Year 2021 that fall within the Committee's jurisdiction.

This year, the Committee plans to pursue an agenda that spurs economic growth and expands Americans' access to affordable health care. As this letter details, we will aim to: protect critical programs like Social Security and Medicare and strengthen Americans' retirement security; improve health care accessibility and affordability, including ending the practice of surprise medical billing and lowering prescription drug costs in the United States; ensure our nation's tax policies are fair for families and small businesses; modernize America's infrastructure to create good jobs and support U.S. competitiveness in the global economy; and promote trade agreements that benefit American workers, strengthen the U.S. economy, and enhance U.S. competitiveness.

I. LEGISLATIVE ISSUES WITH BUDGETARY IMPACT

A. Health Care

The Committee will work to advance policies that improve health care coverage and affordability for all Americans. In particular, we will seek out solutions that lower the cost to patients and the federal government for prescription medicines. Through oversight of Administrative actions and advancement of legislation, the Committee will work to lower costs, improve coverage for Americans and protect individuals with pre-existing conditions. Likewise, for those Americans affected by "surprise medical bills," the Committee will seek to address the root causes and stop this practice entirely. Also importantly, the Committee will work to address Medicare's solvency and gaps in Medicare coverage, as well as to improve health security for older Americans and people living with disabilities on Medicare. The Committee will consider policies in the Medicare program to increase value and ensure that patients continue to have access to quality health care providers. Through all of these initiatives, the Committee will examine health care challenges in rural and underserved communities, including the impact

social determinants of health and health disparities have on affordability and access to care and pursue policies to address inequality and encourage upward mobility throughout the health system and in the economy as a whole.

B. Social Security

The Committee will work to protect and strengthen our nation's most important insurance system, Social Security, so it remains a secure foundation of economic security for retirees and for families who have lost a breadwinner to death or a severe disability. It will reject proposals to reduce Social Security benefits, through legislative, regulatory or administrative changes that deny benefits to individuals who meet the eligibility criteria in the law. It will work with the Appropriations Committee to ensure that the Social Security Administration (SSA) is provided sufficient administrative resources to enable SSA to provide prompt and accurate service to beneficiaries, including reducing excessive wait times for disability appeals hearings, responding to phone calls, serving customers in local field offices, investing in information technology modernization, and meeting its statutory obligation to mail benefit-estimate statements to taxpayers. Additionally, the Committee will continue to oversee SSA operations to ensure that all beneficiaries, workers, and their families are able to access their earned benefits.

C. Tax Policy

The Committee will prioritize tax policies that benefit middle class families and those working to climb into the middle class. The Committee recognizes that, even with significant growth in the economy, for more than two decades middle-class expenses like housing, health care, and higher education have steadily gone up. The tax code influences nearly every aspect of middle-class economic struggles: wage levels, housing and health care markets, access to higher education and worker training, and the cost of raising children. The Committee will examine policies that deliver more inclusive economic growth that supports and grows America's middle class. These worker-focused policies will include infrastructure investment, retirement savings, workforce development, access to higher education, and small business growth. In addition, the Committee will continue to review other tax matters, including administration of the tax laws by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and will closely scrutinize the revenue recommendations contained in the President's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget.

D. Trade

The Committee seeks to ensure that U.S. trade policies and practices, including in coordination with other economic policies, work to the benefit of regular Americans today and in the future. This includes prioritizing the enforcement of U.S. trade laws, trade agreements, and preference programs. The Committee also intends to review and work with the Administration on the implementation of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). The Committee will exercise robust oversight over the Administration's efforts to negotiate with foreign countries to reduce or eliminate restrictions on trade with the United States, including ongoing negotiations with China, Japan, the European Union, and the United Kingdom, as well as soon-to-be initiated negotiations with Kenya and any other potential partners. The Committee will also oversee Administration efforts and initiatives to engage in reform efforts and negotiations at and under

the auspices of the World Trade Organization. The Committee intends to consider updates and enhancements in legislation to reauthorize: U.S. preference programs (including the Generalized System of Preferences, which expires in December 2020, and the Caribbean Basin Trade Preferences Act, which expires in September 2020); the Miscellaneous Tariff Bill, which expires in December 2020; Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act, which expires in June 2021; and Trade Adjustment Assistance, which expires in June 2021. Finally, the Committee will continue its oversight over the budgets and activities of agencies within its jurisdiction, including the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. International Trade Commission.

E. Worker and Family Support

The Committee will work to reduce child poverty and level the playing field for working parents, including providing necessary paid family and medical leave to working Americans of all ages who need it, and improving career pathways for individuals who face barriers to employment and economic mobility. The Committee will continue to oversee the implementation of the bipartisan Family First Prevention Services Act and address the needs of vulnerable children in foster care, including current and former foster care youth transitioning into adulthood. The Committee will also continue to support and oversee the expansion of services to help unemployed workers return to work more quickly. The Committee will act to prevent any lapse in state funding for expiring programs within our jurisdiction.

II. THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET

The Committee is reviewing the President's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget. The budget proposes significant changes in a number of areas within the Committee's jurisdiction. Over the course of the year, the Committee will continue to examine and consider the proposals and assumptions in the President's budget and provide oversight of the Republican tax law and other Administration policies.

III. PUBLIC DEBT LIMIT

The current debt limit suspension period will end on July 31, 2021. The Committee will continue to monitor the level of outstanding debt and will take any necessary action to ensure the consistent financing of government operations.

The Committee on Ways and Means looks forward to working with the Committee on the Budget to promote opportunity for working Americans while continuing to be responsible stewards of Federal spending.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Neal
Chairman