

Fiscal Year 2020 Budget: Members' Day

Testimony to the U.S. House  
Committee on the Budget

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Thank you Chairman Yarmuth and Ranking Member Womack for providing members the opportunity to share our thoughts on the FY 2020 budget resolution. And I appreciate the important work we did together when I was a member of the Committee.

And as many on this committee know pretty well, I adamantly believe that the biggest threat to our nation's future is a looming sovereign debt crisis.

We don't know when this crisis will occur, but we do know that when that day comes, it will cripple the ability of our children and grandchildren to live out the American dream. And what worries me is that we're not all that far away.

Today our national debt stands at over \$22 trillion, and it's only growing.

In fact, CBO is projecting annual trillion-dollar deficits by 2022.

Last year alone we paid \$325 billion just servicing the interest on the debt.

Think of it, within a decade we could spend more on debt interest payments than we do on national defense.

And we also know that the drivers of our debt are mandatory spending and entitlement programs that, if left unchecked and unreformed, will continue to spiral out of control and put us even further on a path towards Greece.

So in light of all this what are Democrats now proposing?

Something that they have privately wanted for years: a massive new entitlement program and a single-payer, government-run healthcare system in Medicare for All.

And while they haven't bothered to say how much it would cost, let alone how they would pay for it, even conservative estimates show that moving to Medicare for All and single-payer system would cost more than \$32 trillion just in the first ten years.

Even if we doubled taxes, we still wouldn't be able to afford to pay for Medicare for All!

That's right, imagine hardworking Americans having to pay twice of what they already do to the federal government for something most of them don't even want.

But it isn't just the astronomical sticker cost that's a problem; it's how it moves us further away from patient-centered care and puts government bureaucrats in between patients and their doctor.

The last time Democrats were pushing healthcare reform under Obamacare, the refrain we heard time and again was that "if you like your healthcare plan, you can keep it."

Of course, we all later learned that was a lie.

To their credit, this time around Democrats are making no such pretenses, openly admitting that Medicare for All would completely eliminate the private insurance market and rip away healthcare from the 93% of Americans who have these plans and rely on them.

Three out of four of whom, by the way, say that they like the healthcare they have now.

This proposal also mandates that the government negotiate drug prices, going as far to say that the government can seize a company's intellectual property and patents if they do not agree with the government's price controls.

That's not the right way to go about bringing down the costs of prescription drugs in our country, an area where I believe we can actually find common ground and forge bipartisan solutions.

Lastly, in the latest example of how extreme the Democratic Party has become on the issue of life, the most recent Medicare for All proposal permits taxpayer funding of abortion, something that 68% of Americans, including many Democrats, oppose.

Mister Chairman, we have already tried a system of soviet-styled, centrally-planned, socialized medicine under Obamacare and as we've seen, the results have been disastrous: skyrocketing premiums and deductibles, fewer choices for American families, and diminished quality of care for patients in need.

So the last thing we need is to double down on big government, one-size fits all solutions or centrally planned systems that concentrates even more power in the hands of Washington bureaucrats.

Instead, we need to unleash the free-market forces of competition, innovation and consumer choice that will bring down healthcare costs and improve access to what all Americans want and deserve: high-quality care.

So I encourage some of colleagues on the other side of the aisle to drop unrealistic, unworkable proposals like Medicare for All that are designed more for liberal activists than lawmakers, and to come work with us in a bi-partisan way to keep what works in our healthcare system and find solutions to the areas where it doesn't.