

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

As a former member of the House Budget Committee, I have supported legislation that seeks to get our long-term fiscal house in order by balancing the budget and working toward eventually eliminating the national debt. I support the aims of the Budget Control Act, which I had hoped would have developed a solution to our long-term entitlement problems.

Of the more than \$3.7 trillion in federal government spending, about one third is spent on discretionary programs, those that Congress and the President can control. But without taking on the complicated task of reforming the other two thirds of government spending, we will bankrupt this great nation.

Commission on Long Term Social Security Solvency

Our country's major mandatory – or entitlement – programs (Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security) are a significant driver of our debt. CBO estimated last April that federal outlays in 2018 would total \$4.1 trillion —\$160 billion, or 4 percent, more than the amount spent in 2017.

Spending is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 5.5 percent over the coming decade, reaching \$7.0 trillion in 2028. Social Security, Medicare, and net interest account for more than two-thirds of that increase. According to the Boards of Trustees for Social Security and Medicare, both are due to become insolvent within the next 25 years if no changes are made.

I have introduced legislation, H.R. 289, that would put us back on a path towards fiscal balance. The bipartisan and bicameral commission would be required to come up with a plan to make Social Security solvent for 75 years. The commission would report its recommendations within one year of its first meeting, and it would take 9 votes for the report to be sent to Congress. At that point, the legislation would get expedited consideration and an up-or-down vote in Congress.

Making smaller changes to critical safety-net programs can prevent painful cuts to current beneficiaries if Congress acts now. Every year that we delay addressing the issue, the solutions become more expensive and more painful, and continue to put our children and grandchildren even deeper in debt.

Funding for Disease Prevention

As Ranking Member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, I am also supportive of robust funding for disease prevention. In Fiscal Year 2019, Congress increased the budget for NIH by \$2 billion, building upon three previous increases of \$2-3 billion each fiscal year. Congress has also maintained strong funding for the CDC's disease prevention programs, working to prevent chronic disease and address global health issues such as malaria and the AIDS epidemic.

As this Committee begins to consider the federal government's budget for the next fiscal year, I urge Committee members to support continued, sustained funding for these important agencies and programs. While the cost of research is high, the cost of doing nothing is higher.

For example, we spend \$2.3 billion at NIH researching Alzheimer's, a disease currently costing the Medicare and Medicaid programs \$186 billion annually. Nearly 30 percent of people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia are on Medicare and Medicaid. Per-person Medicare costs for Alzheimer's and dementia patients are triple that of people without Alzheimer's. Per-person Medicaid costs are 19 times higher.

Funding for this research leading to better treatment and prevention could help lower costs for the country. The same can be said for many other diseases and conditions. I hope this Committee views disease prevention funding for what it is: an investment that will generate tremendous benefits down the road.

Mandatory Budget IHS

Unlike other constituencies, the federal government has a unique government-to-government relationship with Tribes that is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, upheld by U.S. Supreme Court case law, and reinforced by numerous federal statutes. Advance appropriations would ensure that the trust responsibility is not abrogated by Congressional indecision over the annual appropriations process.

There is a demonstrated need for such advance appropriations in Indian Country. The most recent government shutdown caused significant jeopardy to the health and safety of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) due to the lack of funding for IHS, BIA law enforcement, and other crucial BIA services. With respect to IHS, the shutdown destabilized Native health delivery and access to health care providers, damaging Tribal Government operations, and impacting families, children and individuals.

In September 2018, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report examining the feasibility for IHS advance appropriations (GAO-18-652). GAO found that IHS and Tribes are given significant administrative burdens due to the fact that the IHS must modify hundreds of contracts each time they operate under a continuing resolution. In addition, the GAO found that "uncertainty resulting from recurring CRs and from government shutdowns has led to adverse financial effects on tribes and their health care programs." The Congressional Budget Office has noted that enacting advance appropriations does not affect direct spending or revenue.

Nearly every year since 2003, the budget resolution has limited how much and for what purpose advance appropriations can be made. IHS and BIA must be included in future budget resolutions to ensure the agencies, Tribal governments, and urban Indian health care providers can continue to improve the quality of and expand access to health and other services.

Defense Budget

As a senior member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, I am a champion of a strong national defense and returning fiscal discipline to the Pentagon. I support a strong military and believe one of my greatest responsibilities is to support a force postured to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

A long-term debt reduction plan remains the most divisive and elusive issue before Congress. In the face of unprecedented budgetary and fiscal challenges, I firmly believe that a broader discussion and debate must take place that includes not only the cost of weapon systems but the cost to sustain them over their lifecycle. Unfortunately, conflict is more likely now than ever before with our near peer and peer adversaries. While we have adapted to fight counter-insurgencies and terrorists over several decades, a shift to warfare in remote and austere environments, on multiple fronts and domains, will require immense resources to deter and defeat our adversaries.

A robust industrial base is vital to the national security of the United States and to military readiness. As defense budgets have declined, there has been a much-needed focus on the acquisition of new weapons systems to modernize the armed forces. However, little attention has been given to the inescapable fact that sustainment is 70-80 percent of the total lifecycle cost of a weapon system, according to the Department of Defense. Therefore, the ongoing health of the defense industrial base, in its entirety, also must be carefully considered.

The sustainment industrial base is comprised of both private sector and military facilities, each serving a unique and vital role in the maintenance, repair and overhaul of weapons, weapons systems, components, subcomponents, parts and equipment. As budget resources become scarcer, the military facilities and private sectors should focus on the areas in which each excel, entering into public-private partnerships (PPP), as appropriate, to save taxpayer dollars and increase readiness to the warfighter. Furthermore, the Department should learn from recent mistakes and failed policies which include the unnecessary furlough of working capital fund employees or managing by end strength. Workload should be one of the key drivers when managing depots, arsenals, and ammunition plants to ensure the lowest cost to the taxpayer.

Military depots are the backbone of the organic industrial base and are our nation's insurance policy against the tides of economic uncertainty, changes in the defense industry, and wartime demands. Additionally, military depots serve as the appropriate location to maintain command and control of most of our war fighting systems. The B-52 bomber program, among other examples, is a reminder that sustainment of weapons systems for decades beyond their initially projected lifecycle is here to stay and will be essential to meeting military readiness needs. Military depots have proven their value to the taxpayer for efficiently sustaining systems which are no longer profitable or no longer cost-effective to maintain in the private sector. During peacetime or war, military depots meet military readiness requirements and provide critical and necessary skill sets on time and on budget.

Acquisition reform and a review of Goldwater-Nichols should reaffirm the value of military core statutes and the longstanding balance of workload between military depots and the private partners.

It is imperative that Congress confront the difficult budget decisions now, so that national security programs can continue to be funded at a level that ensures our armed forces are ready to meet any number of growing national security threats facing the United States. Congress has no greater responsibility than to provide our military with the training and resources it needs to meet the growing security challenges around the world.