
Senate Budget Lays Damaging Path, House Expected to Consider Own Harmful Plan

Statement of Sharon Parrott, CBPP President, on passage of the Senate budget resolution and coming vote on the House budget resolution:

Overnight, the Senate passed a partisan budget that lays a path for taking food assistance and health coverage away from people and making college more expensive — to pay for defense and deportation funding and, later, costly tax cuts for the wealthy.

And while the Senate plan adheres to Senate Republican leaders' view that the tax cuts and offsets to pay for them should wait for a second fast-track reconciliation bill, it still sets out their broader vision by including massive unspecified cuts and huge tax cuts.

Attention now shifts to the House, which is expected to vote next week on House Republicans' own misguided budget plan: an extreme giveaway to the wealthy at the expense of families who already have a hard time affording food, health care, and college. The House plan lays the groundwork for one "mega" reconciliation bill — and House leadership is pressing the Senate to acquiesce to their vision.

Even as they press hard for their plan, House Republican leaders are reportedly telling members not to worry about the deep cuts it contains because passing it is just a first step toward budget legislation. But the budget plan sets the "rules of the road" and once that course is set, it is very hard to change.

That course would raise families' health care, food, and college costs, increase the nation's economic risks, take health coverage away from millions, and worsen poverty and hardship for tens of millions of people, while doubling down on huge tax giveaways for the wealthy and corporations.

We know this because it directs the committees with jurisdiction over health coverage through Medicaid, food assistance through SNAP, and student loans and school meals to make massive cuts to offset some of the cost of massive tax cuts assigned to the Ways and Means Committee.

The amounts that the committee are directed to cut are minimums or "floors" — meaning they must cut at least that amount and may cut more, but they cannot cut less. And a change made in the House Budget Committee makes deeper cuts more likely.

These aren't just numbers. The loss of Medicaid means, for example, a parent can't get cancer treatment, and a young adult can't get insulin to control their diabetes. Cuts to food assistance mean a parent skips meals so their children can eat or an older person who lost their job has no way to buy groceries.

Outside of the reconciliation instructions, the House budget plan calls for more unspecified cuts, including to the part of the budget that funds schools, college grants, medical research, flight safety, clean air and water, and customer service at the Social Security Administration and the IRS.

This is the wrong direction for the country. Congress should start over and craft a budget that lowers costs and invests in people and families, while raising the revenues from the wealthy to make those investments and reduce economic risks associated with high debt.

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