
Senate Republicans' Opaque Budget Resolution Points in Troubling Direction

Statement of Sharon Parrott, CBPP President, on Senate Budget Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham's proposed budget resolution:

With House Republicans still negotiating a budget plan that is likely to include deeply harmful proposals, Senate Republicans today released a narrower plan, which is both opaque and troubling. The budget framework lays a path for a future budget bill that could pay for increased military and homeland security spending with harmful policies that take food assistance and health coverage away from people who struggle to afford the basics and make college more expensive.

Because the budget resolution hides how it would pay for its \$342 billion spending increase, the policy trade-offs are purposely unclear. Still, there is enough information in the resolution to know that student loans, health coverage through Medicaid, food assistance through SNAP, and energy resilience efforts (funded under the Inflation Reduction Act) could all be cut. If that comes to pass, this would be yet another Republican budget plan that asks those who can least afford it to bear the costs of increased spending.

Here's what we know.

The budget plan would direct various committees with jurisdiction over military and homeland security programs to *increase* funding by up to specified amounts — for example the Committee on Homeland Security is directed to increase spending by up to \$175 billion over the next ten years and the Committee on Armed Services is directed to spend up to \$150 billion more.

Based on Sen. Graham's [press release](#), it appears that the homeland security spending would pay for more border wall construction as well as a large detention and deportation operation. The scale of resources committed goes well beyond any narrow effort related to people convicted of crimes. Deporting millions of our immigrant neighbors, who are working and contributing to our communities, will not make our nation safer. The resources envisioned in the budget plan, however, would escalate efforts to arrest people at job sites, schools, and places of worship and result in families being separated. Mass deportations also harm the economy by taking away workers who do important jobs in our communities.

There is no clarity on how Senate Republicans intend to pay for these spending increases, as Sen. Graham's press release suggests they intend to do.

Instead, the plan would direct four committees in the Senate, including those with jurisdiction over Medicaid, SNAP, student loans, and certain energy resilience programs to make cuts totaling *at least* \$1 billion each, far less than is needed to offset the total increase in spending. That means we

know which committees would be required to come up with cuts to offset the spending, but we don't know how much would come from each committee or which programs they would target for cuts. Even the accompanying budgetary tables obfuscate where the cuts are coming from by placing a very large share of their spending cuts in a catch-all category best described as a hiding place.

While purposely hiding the ball from the public, it is likely that the Senate budget plan will make it harder for families to afford college, health care, and food and result in mass deportations that will hurt our economy, families, and communities. This is hardly a plan focused on addressing the real pocketbook issues of the families President Trump promised to help.

This budget resolution also points to where Senate Republicans are headed on tax policy: extending all of the expensive and skewed 2017 tax cuts. While the Senate budget plan does not have specific instructions for the tax committee, its accompanying budget tables show the expiring 2017 tax cuts being extended. Those large tax cuts would likely be accompanied by proposals such as those being considered in the House, which include massive cuts that jeopardize health care and food assistance for millions of people. Both the House and Senate need to start over.

Policymakers should return to the drawing board to craft a budget that broadens opportunity, lowers costs, and invests in people and communities while responsibly raising revenues from wealthy households and corporations that are needed to make those investments and to lower future economic risks associated with deficits and debt.

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