



March 5, 2024

Dear Chairman Arrington, members of the committee:

Thank you for leading the House Budget Committee's efforts to advance a concurrent resolution on the budget for Fiscal Year 2025. The budget resolution is Congress' crucial first step toward holistic management of the federal budget, and this proposal takes a serious and responsible approach to the federal government roles and challenges.

The chairman's mark wisely envisions focusing the federal government on core constitutional responsibilities, reducing low-priority and wasteful spending, reforming the tax code to support proper activities while improving American competitiveness, and providing a level playing field for all. It is a contrast to the unbounded tax-borrow-spend-subsidize-and-regulate agenda of the current administration, which seems unmoored from any concepts about the proper scope and objects of the federal government.

We are encouraged to see the committee's focus on tackling the debt burden. Federal debt already undermines prosperity, and projected debt growth increasingly risks a catastrophic debt crisis that would do profound damage to our standard of living, security, freedom, and social peace. Debt-financed spending in recent years produced the highest inflation in 41 years, and controlling the debt through spending restraint is paramount to controlling inflation.

We are glad to see the committee marking up the budget resolution in early March as well. As you are aware, Congress has still not completed appropriations legislation for the current fiscal year, which began in October, and the president's budget request is already more than a month late. A healthy appropriations process requires starting on time, and this committee's markup is a good faith effort to do its part.

This budget resolution includes several useful upgrades to congressional budgeting. They include incorporating interest effects in cost estimates and supplementing Federal Credit Reform Act estimates of credit programs with fair value accounting.

Additional upgrades can further strengthen the Budget Committee's guidance and management roles. First and foremost, an annual process that adds authorizing committee contributions to the appropriations committees' important work would reinvigorate representative democracy and improve budget outcomes. It would help Congress begin its budget cycle on time, as would new legislation to require the president to submit a budget request before giving the State of the Union address. Bipartisan, bicameral legislation to

reverse the Carter Administration's creation of shutdowns would help Congress complete the annual process responsibly and on schedule. Well-crafted statutory and constitutional budget targets would push Congress to phase out deficits over a reasonable period. Ideally, such rules would support stable and predictable spending and revenue policies and would be neutral, practical, and comprehensive.

We look forward to working with you on these and other upgrades to federal budgeting. Each has strong potential for broad, bipartisan support, as cosponsors already indicate in some cases.

In the meantime, we thank you for taking a thoughtful, timely, and principled approach to the budget resolution, one of the Budget Committee's primary responsibilities. Rebuilding this muscle memory will pay rich dividends as Congress re-establishes a regular order that works for America in the 21st Century.

Sincerely,

Kurt Couchman
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