



COMMITTEE FOR A RESPONSIBLE FEDERAL BUDGET

April 11, 2018

Dear Member of Congress,

I am writing on behalf of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget to strongly encourage Congress to pass a budget that addresses our dangerous fiscal situation. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 budget deficit will be \$981 billion and starting in FY 2020 we will have indefinite trillion-dollar deficits. By 2028, as a share of the economy interest spending will more than double its 2017 level, while the debt will have grown to 96 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Moreover, assuming current policies, we would see \$2 trillion deficits by 2028 and debt would reach record levels by 2029. These ominous projections clearly show current federal fiscal policy is unsustainable.

Passing and adhering to a budget is one of the most basic tenets of governing. The House and Senate should both pass a budget for FY 2019 that will place our national debt on a downward path relative to GDP. Those who disagree with any formally introduced budget plan should support an alternative budget or outline their own vision for a sustainable fiscal path. At a time of approaching indefinite trillion-dollar deficits, this commitment towards meeting Congress's most basic task of establishing our nation's fiscal course should be a minimum standard for lawmakers to fulfill their responsibilities to their constituents. Policymakers must act to help restore the American people's faith that their government can manage taxpayers' money properly and soundly.

Any FY 2019 budget plan should include the required steps and procedures to enact real deficit reduction in both the near and long terms. In our view, the current fiscal situation is so grim that waiting to take necessary action until after the November election is simply unacceptable.

We are aware Congress included in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 a House and Senate budget "deemer" that some argue make the FY 2019 budget debate unnecessary. Nonetheless, the budget is the only document Congress creates that comprehensively examines total federal revenues, spending, and deficits and lays out a plan for our fiscal future. This basic responsibility cannot be put off.

We suggest any FY 2019 budget blueprint should meet the following standards:

- Set a meaningful and realistic fiscal goal that would significantly improve our fiscal path;
- Set responsible, achievable, and enforceable levels in both the short and long terms for discretionary and mandatory spending as well as revenue;
- Develop a credible and detailed plan to achieve this goal;
- Rely on realistic economic assumptions and reject various budget gimmicks (including Overseas Contingency Operations) and fake savings that make current and future deficits appear artificially lower;



- Issue reconciliation instructions to all relevant authorizing committees to fulfill the budget's assumed reforms and begin the process of enacting needed deficit reduction; and
- Strengthen and improve budget enforcement procedures to help ensure the budget's fiscal goals are met.

Congress should make passage of an FY 2019 budget the highest priority and begin as soon as possible the necessary task of reducing our nation's coming trillion-dollar deficits. We welcome the opportunity to work with every Member of Congress to adopt and implement a fiscally responsible budget plan. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Maya MacGuineas

President, Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget