



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

134 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 (202) 226-7200 ★ democrats.budget.house.gov

Chris Van Hollen,
Ranking Democrat

Democratic Amendments to the Republican

2017 Budget Resolution

Summaries, Text, and Vote Tallies

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This document has not been reviewed and approved by the Democratic Caucus of the House Budget Committee and may not necessarily reflect the views of all members.

Democratic Amendments to the Republican 2017 Budget Resolution:

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On March 16, 2016, the House Budget Committee approved the fiscal year 2017 Republican budget resolution, a deeply divisive plan that protects wealthy and powerful interests at the top of the economic ladder at the expense of working families, students, seniors, and everyone else. Instead of presenting a positive, constructive plan for the country, the budget merely serves as a vessel for the extreme Tea Party agenda. It dramatically undermines American competitiveness by gutting crucial investments in education, research, and transportation and relies on the failed theory of trickle-down economics to put the burden of deficit reduction squarely on the middle class and vulnerable populations.

Committee Democrats offered 28 amendments to the budget, each crafted with the goal of reversing harmful policies or supporting priorities that are vital to Americans. Had the amendments been adopted, they would have helped lift millions of Americans out of poverty by creating good jobs in the short term and increasing paychecks by protecting American workers from middle class tax increases. Democratic amendments would have funded priorities for all Americans, not just the wealthy, growing the economy with wise investments in education, science and infrastructure while also protecting government guarantees to our seniors, preserving the safety net for those who need it, and protecting public health and health care access.

The amendments offset any proposed spending or tax breaks for working families by cutting unproductive special interest tax breaks for the wealthiest and the well-connected – including closing tax loopholes that allow inversions and encourage firms to ship jobs and capital overseas and shelter their profits in foreign tax havens, and egregious tax breaks such as tax deductions for corporate jets and subsidies for big oil companies. Republicans rejected every amendment offered by the Democrats.

The following is a description of Democratic amendments. The Appendix at the end includes the text of each amendment and each roll call vote tally.

Protecting the Vulnerable and Maintaining Government Guarantees

Protecting Women's Health Care – amendment #1 (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Van Hollen)

This amendment expresses Congress's strong support for protecting women's access to quality, affordable health care and opposing repeal of the Affordable Care Act, cuts to Medicaid, and restrictions on funding to Planned Parenthood.

A **YES** vote defends women's access to health services, including preventive care, cancer screenings, and contraception. A **NO** vote denies women's access to the services they need.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 10 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #1 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Emergency Assistance for Families in Flint, Michigan – amendment #2 (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Dingell)

This amendment provides emergency funding in 2016 to address the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, through infrastructure repairs, economic development, education, health monitoring, mitigating environmental health and safety issues, and providing resources to pregnant women and new mothers.

A **YES** vote ensures those in Flint receive resources that are critical to responding to the drinking water crisis. A **NO** vote fails to assist families and thousands of children in Flint who have been affected by lead exposure.

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 14 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #2 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Protect Medicaid for Children, Seniors, and People with Disabilities – amendment #4 (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Pascrell)

This deficit-neutral amendment ensures that America's children, seniors, and people with disabilities do not lose access to medical and long-term care services by rejecting the Republican plan to block-grant Medicaid and slash its funding by roughly \$1 trillion over ten years.

A **YES** vote protects health care services for children, seniors, and people with disabilities. A **NO** vote undermines care for vulnerable members of our society and hard-working American families.

This amendment was rejected, 20 No votes to 14 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #4 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Preventing the End of Medicare as We Know It – amendment #5 **(Lead Sponsor: Rep. McDermott)**

This amendment opposes changes that would eliminate guaranteed health insurance benefits for seniors and people with disabilities under the Medicare program, increase costs for seniors and people with disabilities by establishing a Medicare voucher or premium support plan that provides limited payments to Medicare beneficiaries to purchase health care in the private health insurance market, or weaken the traditional Medicare program by diverting the healthiest enrollees into private plans and undermining the program's ability to control costs while offering access to a broad range of providers. The Republican budget calls for transforming Medicare into a premium support or voucher program that would dramatically increase premiums for seniors who wish to use traditional Medicare.

A **YES** vote protects the Medicare guarantee for senior citizens and persons with disabilities who rely on Medicare. A **NO** vote jeopardizes health care coverage for these populations by refusing to prevent proposals that shift health care costs from the federal government to seniors and persons with disabilities by transforming Medicare into a voucher or premium support system.

This amendment was rejected, 13 No votes to 21 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #5 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Eliminate Fast Track for Slashing Safety Net – amendment #6 **(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Moore)**

This amendment eliminates the “Reconciliation and Related Matters” title from the Republican resolution. Republicans have suggested that they plan to use the fast track reconciliation process to make changes to safety net programs. The Republican track record suggests that the policies they will pursue will hurt vulnerable Americans. Changes to these important programs that keep roughly 40 million people out of poverty should not be fast-tracked through Congress.

A **YES** vote drops reconciliation instructions from the budget resolution, ensuring full deliberation on any forthcoming proposals. A **NO** vote retains instructions that may be used to shred the safety net that protects millions of Americans

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 11 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #6 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

National Strategy to Eradicate Poverty and Increase Opportunity – amendment #7 **(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Lee)**

This amendment supports a goal of developing a national strategy to eliminate poverty, with the initial goal of cutting poverty in half in ten years, and extending equitable access to economic opportunity to all Americans. It discusses a multi-pronged approach that allows workers to develop skills and have good jobs, removes barriers and obstacles including environmental risks to taking advantage of economic opportunities, and supports the most vulnerable in society. The

amendment includes findings that make clear the important role that government plays in reducing poverty.

A **YES** vote supports development of a comprehensive national strategy to address poverty and lack of opportunity. A **NO** vote rejects both the findings that government programs play an important role in reducing poverty, and the need to develop a national strategy to eradicate poverty and increase opportunity.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 13 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #7 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Fully Fund VA Programs and Protect them from Future Government Shutdowns – amendment #12
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Moulton)

This deficit-neutral amendment rejects \$2.4 billion in cuts below the President’s request for veterans’ programs for 2017 and 2018 to ensure veterans receive timely access to health care and benefits. It also extends advance appropriations to all discretionary programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to help ensure funding is in place at the beginning of each fiscal year and to protect veterans’ programs from future government shutdowns. The amendment also supports requiring the VA to submit along with its annual budget a “Future-Years Veterans Program.” This will facilitate transparency and oversight with regard to VA’s longer term plans and it will help Congress in enacting adequate advance appropriations.

A **YES** vote ensures veterans receive the benefits they have earned in a timely fashion and protects veterans’ programs from a government shutdown. A **NO** vote means providing insufficient resources to ensure timely provision of benefits and services, and leaves those programs vulnerable to government shutdowns.

This amendment was rejected, 19 No votes to 11 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #12 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Social Security 2100 – amendment #16
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Pascrell)

This amendment adds a policy statement calling on Congress to support legislation that extends the solvency of the Social Security Trust Funds while increasing Social Security benefits. It cites H.R. 1391, the Social Security 2100 Act, as an example of such an approach.

A **YES** vote calls for strengthening Social Security while increasing benefits. A **NO** vote rejects such an approach and opposes benefit increases as part of Social Security reform.

This amendment was rejected, 20 No votes to 12 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #16 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Social Security Benefit Cut – amendment #17
(Lead Sponsor: Van Hollen)

This amendment makes it the policy of the resolution to oppose cuts in Social Security benefits now or in the future.

A **YES** vote expresses support for Social Security and opposition to benefit cuts. A **NO** vote indicates possible support for cutting Social Security benefits in the future.

This amendment was rejected, 17 No votes to 11 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #17 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Protect Nutrition Assistance – amendment #18
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Moore)

This deficit neutral amendment rejects the cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the Republican budget. There is no way to achieve these savings without either pushing vulnerable people from SNAP rolls or cutting SNAP benefits. The amendment also adds funding for the President's proposal to create a permanent summer child nutrition electronic funds transfer program that will help reduce food insecurity for millions of children who lose access to meals at school during the summer.

A **YES** vote protects SNAP and enhances child nutrition, helping millions of vulnerable Americans maintain adequate diets. A **NO** vote means slashing SNAP funding, putting the nutritional needs of struggling families at risk, and leaving millions of children without access to nutrition assistance during summer months.

This amendment was rejected, 20 No votes to 12 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #18 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Protect Tax Credits to Keep Health Coverage Affordable – amendment #19
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. McDermott)

This deficit-neutral amendment restores the premium tax credits provided by the Affordable Care Act to ensure that middle class individuals and families and those striving to join the middle class can afford to purchase quality health care insurance plans that cover necessary health care goods and services, that protect patients from unlimited out-of-pocket costs that can lead to financial ruin, and that do not deny coverage or charge higher premiums based on pre-existing conditions.

A **YES** vote supports retaining the premium tax credits that are helping millions of people buy quality, affordable health coverage. A **NO** vote rejects the Affordable Care Act tax credits that help make health coverage affordable and instead endorses taking away these tax credits starting next year.

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 13 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #19 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Improving the Availability of Long-Term Care Services and Supports for Seniors and Other Americans – amendment #25
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Dingell)

This amendment accommodates deficit-neutral initiatives to improve the availability of long-term care services and insurance for seniors and other Americans. Such initiatives could include creation of a comprehensive long-term care insurance program, pilot programs or studies to determine the best options for improving access to long-term care services, or improvements to Medicare, Medicaid, or other programs to provide increased access to long-term care.

A **YES** vote supports improving access to affordable long-term care services. A **NO** vote rejects the idea that the Congress should take action to make sure senior citizens and persons with disabilities can get long-term care services when they need them.

This amendment was rejected, 20 No votes to 14 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #25 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Boosting Wages and Investing in Economic Growth

Adopt Comprehensive Immigration Reform – amendment #3
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Yarmuth)

This amendment changes the budget to accommodate passage of comprehensive immigration reform, such as the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act proposed by House Democrats during the 113th Congress, which will boost our economy, lower deficits, secure our borders, and establish clear and just rules for citizenship.

A **YES** vote boosts our economy, lowers our deficits, extends the Solvency of Social Security, helps secure our borders, and establishes clear and just rules for citizenship. A **NO** vote means a less robust economy, higher deficits, a less secure border, and an immigration system that will continue to keep millions of hard-working, law-abiding families who have lived in our communities for decades hiding in the shadows.

This amendment was rejected, 19 No votes to 15 Yes votes. See amendment #3 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Protect Scientific Jobs and Provide a National Investment in Biomedical Research – amendment #9
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Castor)

This deficit-neutral amendment provides an increase in mandatory funding for one year in order to maintain the purchasing power of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for 2017, and to promote scientific jobs and cutting-edge biomedical research.

A **YES** vote maintains NIH's ability to support cutting-edge biomedical research and scientific jobs in 2017. A **NO** vote jeopardizes promising research and scientific jobs.

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 12 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #9 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Debt-Free College – amendment #10
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Pocan)

This amendment states Congress's intent to ensure that all students have access to debt-free higher education through efforts such as support for states to lower student costs, increased federal financial aid, innovation to enable speedy college completion, and options to lower existing student debt.

A **YES** vote expands access to affordable college education for all. A **NO** vote adds to the burden of student debt, which had already risen to \$1.3 trillion by 2015.

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 12 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #10 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Equal Pay for Equal Work – amendment #13
(Lead sponsor: Rep. Norcross)

This amendment states Congress's intent to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act to ensure women receive equal pay for equal work. It also provides an additional \$50 million for the Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to properly investigate cases of wage discrimination, implement the President's directive to the EEOC, and enforce cases of wage theft and other wage violations.

A **YES** vote supports the Paycheck Fairness Act and boosts funding to fight wage discrimination and wage theft. A **NO** vote leaves the status quo of pay disparities between women and men.

This amendment was rejected, 20 No votes to 13 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #13 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Importance of Raising the Minimum Wage – amendment #15
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Yarmuth)

This amendment adds a policy statement calling on Congress to increase the federal minimum wage to at least \$12 per hour.

A **YES** vote boosts paychecks for minimum wage workers. A **NO** vote rejects an increase in the minimum wage, which has been unchanged since 2009.

This amendment was rejected, 17 No votes to 12 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #15 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Lower Student Debt by Refinancing Student Loans and Protecting College Aid – amendment #20
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Pocan)

This deficit-neutral amendment helps students lower their debt by accommodating legislation that lets them refinance federal student loans to the lowest available rate, and by rejecting the Republican budget's cuts to existing college aid.

A **YES** vote lowers students' debt by allowing them to refinance their federal loans and protecting current grant aid and student loan rates and repayment options. A **NO** vote makes college less accessible and increases student debt, which already stands at more than \$1.3 trillion and exceeds all credit card debt in this country.

This amendment was rejected, 19 No votes to 12 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #20 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Invest in Transportation Infrastructure – amendment #21
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Castor)

This deficit-neutral amendment adds the transportation infrastructure funding needed to finance the investments proposed in the President's 21st Century Clean Transportation initiative.

A **YES** increases investments in transportation infrastructure. A **NO** vote opposes such investment, which are cut under the Republican budget.

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 12 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #21 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Make it in America: Accelerating Growth in US Manufacturing – amendment #23
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Ryan)

This deficit-neutral amendment provides funding to establish a Scale-Up Manufacturing Investment Initiative and expand the National Network of Manufacturing Institutes, as proposed in the President's budget.

A **YES** vote funds efforts to assist U.S. manufacturing through public-private partnerships that invest in the development of manufacturing technologies and capabilities and helps emerging manufacturing technologies reach commercial viability. A **NO** vote opposes such efforts.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 14 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment # 23 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Improving the Economy and Creating Jobs in Areas with High Poverty, Unemployment, Food Insecurity, and Foreclosure Rates – amendment #24
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Lujan Grisham)

This amendment accommodates deficit-neutral legislation to foster economic development and boost employment in targeted areas.

A **YES** vote supports additional initiatives for economic enhancement and job creation in areas with high poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, and foreclosure rates. A **NO** vote rejects job creation and economic expansion, and instead supports special interest tax breaks and other unjustified loopholes that encourage firms to ship jobs overseas and shelter their profits in foreign tax havens.

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 14 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #24 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Protect the Corporation for National and Community Service – amendment #28
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Moulton)

This deficit-neutral amendment protects support for the Corporation for National and Community Service, a model of private-public partnership that engages millions of Americans in tackling pressing needs by supporting students and veterans, rebuilding communities, increasing opportunity, and working for a better future.

A **YES** vote supports community service that not only provides education and career skills to participants but also expands economic opportunity and tackles national priorities. A **NO** vote denies support for national service opportunities that leverage more in outside resources than the federal dollars invested.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 14 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #28 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Protecting Public Health and Safety

Reduce Prescription Drug Costs for All Americans – amendment #8 (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Lujan Grisham)

This amendment endorses the principle of building on the Affordable Care Act to improve access to and affordability of prescription drugs for all Americans and to hold the health care industry accountable for the prices that consumers pay for critical medications, while providing appropriate incentives to promote pharmaceutical innovation that can lead to new cures and more effective treatments.

A **YES** vote supports Congress taking action to make prescription drugs more affordable for Americans. A **NO** vote is a vote against taking action to make prescription drugs more affordable.

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 13 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #8 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Ensure Safe Drinking Water and Prevent Childhood Lead Exposure – amendment #11 (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Lieu)

This deficit-neutral amendment assists states with improvements to drinking water infrastructure that are essential to the nation's health and wellbeing and protects children from lead exposure.

A **YES** vote ensures states have the resources they need to repair drinking water infrastructure and prevent childhood lead exposure. A **NO** vote rejects safeguards to public health through safe drinking water and the prevention of lead poisoning in children.

This amendment was rejected, 20 No votes to 13 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #11 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Preventing Prescription Opioid and Heroin Abuse – amendment #14 (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Ryan)

This deficit-neutral amendment provides \$1 billion in mandatory funding to support the President's initiative to address the nation's prescription opioid and heroin epidemic. The funding will help states to improve access to medication-assisted treatment and other activities. A **YES** vote supports a serious investment in expanding treatment for Americans with opioid use disorder. A **NO** vote opposes this lifesaving investment.

This amendment was rejected, 18 No votes to 12 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #14 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Prevent Cyber Attacks – amendment # 26
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Lieu)

This deficit-neutral amendment funds the President’s proposal to establish the Information Technology (IT) Modernization Fund as part of an initiative to bolster the federal government’s cybersecurity. It adds \$3 billion of one-time mandatory funding to start the fund, which will facilitate the replacement of aging and expensive-to-maintain information technology systems that also pose cybersecurity and operational risks.

A **YES** vote ensures vulnerable legacy information systems are modernized to protect personal and sensitive government information from cyber-attack and theft. A **NO** vote keeps legacy information systems vulnerable, wasting money and compromising government operations.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 14 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #26 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

Prevent Gun Violence, Urge the Passage of the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act of 2015, and Provide Mental Health Services to Victims – amendment #27
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Norcross)

This deficit-neutral amendment funds the President’s requested increase for the National Instant Criminal Background Check System to ensure that no individual who is ineligible to receive a firearm is granted legal access to one. It also increases funding by \$500 million over two years to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to enable more victims of gun violence to access mental health services.

A **YES** vote prevents individuals on the terrorist watch list and other ineligible individuals from acquiring a firearm by ensuring better background checks. A **NO** vote means fewer resources to address the troubling public health epidemic that gun violence has become in this country.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 14 Yes votes, with only Democratic support. See amendment #27 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.

National Security

Preventing Further Abuse of the Overseas Contingency Operations Designation – amendment #22
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Lee)

This amendment prevents the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) designation from being used as a loophole to get around funding caps set in law. It adds budget enforcement language that prevents OCO allocations from being increased above the levels specified in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 for defense and international affairs.

A **YES** vote closes the OCO budget loophole and instills more discipline and transparency in the budget process. A **NO** vote undermines the budget process by keeping the OCO budget loophole open to allow backdoor funding increases above budget caps set in law.

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 15 Yes votes. See amendment #22 in the Appendix for the text and the roll call of votes.