

Questions for Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan on the GOP Budget

Last week, House Republicans put forward a more-of-the-same budget that ends the Medicare guarantee while protecting tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, and puts our economic recovery and jobs at risk. While Republicans were clear that they want to protect tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and place the burden of deficit reduction onto seniors, the middle class, working families, and the most vulnerable, their budget left several questions unanswered:

1. The Republican budget calls for the elimination of special deductions in order to cover the cost of tax cuts for wealthy Americans, so which popular deductions are Republicans ending? The mortgage interest deduction? The charitable donations deduction?
2. Republicans plan to cut the top income tax rate to 25% while ruling out eliminating special preferences for capital gains and dividends, so how will they offset the cost of additional tax cuts for millionaires?
3. Republicans are going to cut “other mandatory” spending by \$1.9 trillion. They’ve only identified \$134 billion in cuts - to food stamps – so what else are they cutting? Supplemental Security Income for low-income seniors and the disabled that helps them meet their basic needs? TANF for low-income families working their way out of poverty? Unemployment insurance for people who lose their jobs through no fault of their own? Or military retiree and survivor benefits?
4. The Republican Medicare program depends on vouchers that do not keep pace with health inflation, so how much should seniors expect to see their costs increase and is it credible to say that Medicare remains an option if no one can afford it?
5. With two-thirds of every Medicaid dollar going to finance nursing home and health care for seniors and the disabled, how do Republicans justify cutting the program by \$1.7 trillion and where do they suggest states turn to find the necessary funding to continue providing care to our most vulnerable?
6. What is Republicans’ plan for slowing the growth of health care costs and stopping insurance company abuses if they repeal the Affordable Care Act and roll back patient protections?
7. How do we spur job creation here at home when the Republican budget increases incentives that encourage corporations to ship profits, intellectual property, and jobs overseas?
8. Why are Republicans cutting Pell grants for millions of students when there’s no need for a significant cut?
9. How will we implement an all-of-the-above energy strategy when the Republican budget eliminates tax support, loans, and grants for renewable energy sources while continuing unnecessary subsidies for major oil companies making record profits?
10. Since the Republican budget reneges on the agreement both parties reached in August, why should Republicans be considered credible negotiators in the future?