



*The Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Chairman*

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## **Ways & Means Members, OMB Director Orszag Tackle Critical Economic Issues**

*Lawmakers talk about President's FY2010 Budget Proposal, investments in long-term economic growth*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The Ways and Means Committee today held a hearing to review President Obama's Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Overview with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Peter R. Orszag. The hearing focused on a number of economic policy issues under the Committee's jurisdiction.

Committee Members discussed the following issues with Director Orszag during today's hearing:

Chairman Charles B. Rangel:

**“It took a great deal of political courage for President Obama to tell the American people how much the war costs and budget for items like fixing the alternative minimum tax and reimbursing doctors for accepting Medicare patients,”** said Chairman Charles B. Rangel (D-NY). **“Nothing is free. You have to have a budget, someone has to pay for it, and our nation must be guided by what is right and moral for the majority of its people. As long as you can convince me that 95 percent of working people are going to get a tax cut, it is going to be very hard for me to believe that this is not the equitable way to go.”**

Trade Subcommittee Chairman Sander M. Levin:

**“President Obama's budget tackles hard issues like healthcare, education and energy policy directly, showing the American people the importance of immediate investments for future growth,”** said Trade Subcommittee Chairman Sander M. Levin (D-MI). **“The cost of inaction is simply too great to ignore and we look forward to working with President Obama to move forward and make progress on these critical areas so that together we may grow our economy out of this crisis.”**

Income Security and Family Support Subcommittee Chairman Jim McDermott:

**“We cannot let the economic crisis prevent us from addressing the crisis we face in health care, in climate change, and in re-establishing responsible Federal oversight that I believe would have sounded the alarm about the dangers that have resulted in the worst economic crisis since the Depression,”** said Income Security and Family Support Subcommittee Chairman Jim McDermott (D-WA). **“The American people expect a lot of us and they deserve our very best.”**

Oversight Subcommittee Chairman John Lewis:

**“I believe that healthcare is a right and not a privilege,”** said Oversight Subcommittee Chairman John Lewis (D-GA). **“People should not have to choose between paying their rent and taking their sick child to the doctor, yet this is a choice that is made every day in America. I am so glad that the President’s budget includes a reserve fund to make healthcare available to all Americans.”**

Select Revenue Measures Subcommittee Chairman Richard E. Neal:

**“I am very pleased that President Obama’s budget proposal includes bipartisan legislation I have worked on in recent years – legislation that has been applauded by the Heritage Foundation and Brookings Institution -- to provide automatic enrollment in IRA accounts to help American workers rebuild economic security through increased savings,”** said Select Revenue Measures Subcommittee Chairman Richard E. Neal (D-MA). **“I also appreciate that President Obama’s budget restores an emphasis on tax relief for hardworking families, rather than continuing the failed philosophies of recent years that tax cuts on investment income pay for themselves.”**

Social Security Subcommittee Chairman John Tanner:

**“I want to thank the Administration for making a good start on the resource problem at the Social Security Administration, especially as it relates to clearing the disability backlog and strengthening program integrity reviews,”** said Social Security Subcommittee Chairman John Tanner (D-TN). **“As Chairman of the Social Security Subcommittee, I look forward to working with the President to reduce the backlog and get beneficiaries the benefits they have earned.”**

Congressman Xavier Becerra:

**“This budget makes critical and transparent investments in our people—in healthcare, education and energy,”** said Congressman Xavier Becerra (D-CA). **“President Obama promised to target his investments toward working families and small business owners—the heart of America’s middle class. He’s right on the money!”**

Congressman Lloyd Doggett:

**“Director Orszag’s testimony reflects the genuine change that the Obama Administration represents,”** said Congressman Lloyd Doggett (D-TX). **“The Budget embraces several measures I have long championed to shut down tax loopholes. President Obama recognizes that without greater tax fairness we cannot expect the American people to share in the burden of climbing out of the giant hole in which failed Republican policies have forced our country. Director Orszag also recognizes that we must act this year on global warming,**

what he acknowledge is the ‘key threat to our planet.’ I welcome the opportunity to work with him on these and other important issues as we move forward.”

Congressman Earl Pomeroy:

**“Out of control health care costs are putting tremendous strain on our federal budget, and adding to our already staggering deficit,”** said Congressman Earl Pomeroy (D-ND). **“Action is needed immediately to rein in these costs. The President’s Budget makes the investments we need today – like the deployment of health information technology, comparative effectiveness research and promotion of health and wellness – to save money tomorrow and strengthen the long term financial health of our government.”**

Congressman Mike Thompson:

**“For the first time in years this budget is honest with the American people,”** said Congressman Mike Thompson (D-CA). **“It includes the true costs of the war, tax cuts, and doctor reimbursements that were hidden in the last six budget proposals. Just as important, this budget finally addresses the future of health care reform, education and innovation, and invests in renewable energy projects that will create jobs and help break our dependence on foreign oil.”**

Congressman Earl Blumenauer:

**“This is a fuller, fairer, and more comprehensive budget proposal than we have seen in eight years,”** said Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR). **“The cap and trade program laid out in the President’s budget will generate revenue, and members of the Ways and Means Committee will have an important role to play in shaping this pivotal program. We will also work to address healthcare reform in a way that will increase quality while decreasing costs. I am hopeful that as we move forward with climate change legislation, health care reform, drawing down our troops in Iraq, and improving our nation’s infrastructure, Congress and the new Administration can work together to put our country back on track.”**

Congressman Ron Kind:

**“Health care reform is a vital part of our long-term budget plan,”** said Congressman Ron Kind (D-WI). **“However, we must ensure that we focus not only on expanding access, but also containing costs for everyone. For too long we have had a health care system that has rewarded utilization and consumption. We need to reward outcomes and performance. Through coordinated team approaches, greater transparency, information technology, and creativity on the state level, we can develop a system that starts rewarding what works.”**

Congressman Joseph Crowley:

**“Creating jobs is ‘Job One’ for the Democratic Congress, and we are working hand-in-hand with the Obama Administration to enact policies that have a proven track record of success,”** said Congressman Joseph Crowley (D-NY). **“Because, let’s remember that for every 16 private-sector jobs created by the Clinton Administration, only one was created during the Bush Administration. Today, I was pleased to hear the Administration’s Budget Director, Peter Orszag, reaffirm how the Democrats’ economic recovery plan is already putting Americans back to work – with more than \$47 million going to New York State**

yesterday for shovel-ready transportation projects. I am confident that by continuing to work together we will jumpstart our economy and put Americans back to work.”

Congressman Kendrick Meek:

**“I want to commend the Administration on permanently extending and enhancing the child tax credit,”** said Congressman Kendrick Meek (D-FL). **“Twenty percent of families in Florida who were not covered by the child tax credit before the Recovery Act are now covered and that is critical for the wellbeing of our state.”**

Congressman Chris Van Hollen:

**“President Obama's budget tackles the climate challenge head-on, with an explicit call for scientifically driven greenhouse gas reductions, a 100 percent auction of permits to pollute and returning the vast majority of the resulting auction proceeds to the American people,”** said Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD). **“I look forward to working with the President and my colleagues to get this job done.”**

Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz:

**“President Obama put forth a budget that is very clear about the need for deficit reduction and fiscal responsibility,”** said Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz (D-PA). **“His budget also makes it very clear that our future economic competitiveness is dependent on making smart investments now, particularly in the area of healthcare. Building on what works in healthcare, we have to ensure all Americans have access to affordable, quality healthcare.”**

Congressman Bob Etheridge:

**“A budget is more than just a document, it is a statement of our nation’s priorities and values,”** said Congressman Bob Etheridge (D-NC). **“We must make critical investments in education, health care and energy now in order to grow our economy and provide for our future stability, and the President’s budget proposal reflects this need. I am particularly pleased that the President is proposing to make Pell Grants mandatory instead of discretionary. This change will empower students by letting them know at an early age that they will be able to afford a higher education.”**

Congresswoman Linda Sánchez:

**“After inheriting a legacy of misplaced priorities, the President’s budget puts a much-needed down payment on universal healthcare,”** said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (D-CA). **“We’re finally going to have a government that helps people and a budget that looks out for the middle class.”**

Congressman Brian Higgins:

**“I am thrilled with the news that the President proposes doubling funding for cancer research, an increase of \$6 billion,”** said Congressman Brian Higgins (D-NY). **“We are on the cusp of developing the medical means to reach the goal of eliminating all suffering and death due to cancer but that goal won’t be met without funding for research, technology and treatments. This budget demonstrates a new and long overdue commitment to this cause. This is great news for the millions of Americans who suffer from cancer and their families and promising news for NCI Centers, like Roswell Park Cancer Institute in my**

**district in Western New York, whose employees work tirelessly every day toward the goal of ending suffering due to cancer in our lifetime.”**

Congressman John Yarmuth:

**“This budget is a clear departure from the failed ideas of the last Administration,”** said Congressman John Yarmuth (D-KY). **“This is the most honest, transparent budget we have seen in years, and it charts a course that will get us through this economic crisis and invest in tomorrow’s jobs, younger generations, and a thriving American future.”**

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