

AARP: Budget Would Upend Vital Programs and Shift Costs to Older Americans

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Acknowledges bipartisan effort needed to strengthen Social Security

WASHINGTON— AARP Executive Vice President Nancy A. LeaMond released the following statement in reaction to the budget proposal released today by U.S. House of Representatives Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan:

“AARP believes that as Members of Congress consider proposals to address our nation’s fiscal challenges, they must be mindful of the impact on real people, not just the numbers. While the House Budget Committee Chairman’s proposal offers new ideas for confronting the deficit, AARP believes the proposal lacks balance and would result in a large cost shift to current and future retirees.

“The Chairman’s proposal, rather than tackling skyrocketing health care costs, would simply shift these costs onto the backs of people in Medicare. It would undermine Medicare’s promise of secure health coverage—a guarantee that future seniors have contributed to through a lifetime of hard work. If Congress is serious about reining in Medicare costs, it can start by allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices and speeding up access to generic versions of expensive biologic drugs.

“The proposal would repeal recently enacted protections in the health care law, a step backward for the needs of older Americans and our nation’s health system. Medicare is just one part of our nation’s health system, which includes public,

individual, and employer-based health insurance. If we're serious about lowering health care costs, we can't just look to Medicare and Medicaid for savings. We must improve the delivery of health care, including better coordination of care, and remove waste from the entire health care system.

"The Chairman's overhaul proposal to turn Medicaid into block grants could deny vulnerable seniors and the disabled access to long-term care and force deep cuts in quality and safety in nursing homes, leaving more seniors at risk of elder abuse and neglect. Instead of imperiling seniors' access to vital services, Congress should work with the states to find smarter ways to save Medicaid money, such as allowing more seniors to receive needed services in their homes and communities.

"As this budget acknowledges, any changes to Social Security must be focused on ensuring the retirement security of present and future retirees, and not simply to reduce the deficit. AARP agrees that protecting and strengthening Social Security must be done on a bipartisan basis, and we welcome the opportunity to continue the conversation with our membership and all Americans about how to achieve that goal.

"As we tackle our nation's fiscal challenges, we urge that we not upend crucial programs that will come at the cost of seniors' health and financial security. We will work with leaders on both sides of the aisle to discuss proposals with the goal of enhancing the health and income security of older Americans and their families."

For more information, please visit www.aarp.org.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a membership that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with nearly 35 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to news source for AARP's millions of members and Americans 50+; AARP VIVA, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.