

Washington, D.C. – Representative David Price (NC-04) released the following statement today as the House of Representatives considered the Republican budget reconciliation plan. The Republican reconciliation package would avert the sequestration of defense funds Republicans agreed to in the Budget Control Act by cutting deeply into health care for low-income children and women, food and nutrition assistance, and other vital safety net programs for the poorest Americans.

"Twice this Congress House Republicans have pushed budget proposals that would end Medicare as we know it and slash programs that grow the middle class to pay for tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans. Today, they are back for another bite at the apple with a budget reconciliation plan that again goes against American values.

"While I am in complete agreement that we must recreate the fiscal discipline that allowed us to achieve budget surpluses in the 1990s, I cannot accept extremist measures that target the most vulnerable Americans while asking nothing of those who are most able to sacrifice. As a nation, we should be investing in our future, guaranteeing dignity in old age and ensuring opportunity for everyone who is willing to work hard and pay by the rules. Adding insult to injury, the bill before us today averts only the sequestration of defense funds and does nothing to address the impending drastic cuts to domestic spending and the across-the-board Medicare cut.

"The Democratic plan offers a balanced way forward that builds on the domestic cuts and mandatory savings already achieved and more closely mirrors bipartisan plans like the ones proposed by Simpson-Bowles and Rivlin-Domenic. Instead of allowing us to vote on that plan today, we are only offered an up or down vote on the Republican budget reconciliation plan—a plan that funnels money 'saved' from cuts to important domestic programs into additional defense spending that was not even requested by the Department of Defense.

"The Republican plan asks us to eliminate the breakthrough preventive health care fund created by the Affordable Care Act to provide free childhood immunizations and breast cancer screenings. It also would eliminate health coverage for at least 300,000 kids on the Children's Health Insurance Program, reduce food and nutrition assistance that goes to 20 million households and kick another 300,000 children off school meal programs. Should we ask these children to go hungry so that the wealthiest can keep their Bush tax cuts?

May 10, 2012

"These shameful cuts are only 'necessary' because Republicans continue to insist that no revenue can ever be raised to reduce the deficit and pay for programs that benefit our people. Valuing tax breaks for the wealthy over the health of children and women is wrong. I will vote no, and I urge House Republicans to embrace a balanced approach to averting the sequester that is consistent with American values.

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