

## **What They're Saying: President Trump's Budget**

*The President released his budget this week, and it has been swiftly panned for making unrealistic economic growth assumptions, failing to address massive deficits and debt, and breaking promises the President made – like protecting Medicare – just last week in his State of the Union. Here's a look at what the press and news columnists are saying about the budget:*

### **NEWS COVERAGE**

News coverage has highlighted the President's "fantasy" math, abandonment of his pledge to wipe out the deficit in eight years, and his broken promise that he would protect Medicare from cuts.

#### **From Politico:**

"President Donald Trump sent another fantasy budget to Congress on Monday, thumbing his nose at the very spending levels he signed into law last summer." [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

#### **From USA Today:**

"Donald Trump promised during his presidential campaign in 2016 that he would wipe out the federal deficit in eight years. When Trump submitted his fourth proposed budget to Congress on Monday, he abandoned that pledge, as he did in his three previous budget proposals." [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

#### **From Market Watch:**

"The White House unveiled its budget proposal on Monday, part of which appears to contradict the promises the president made to save safety-net programs like Social Security and Medicare."

"This is not the first time a budget proposal has suggested cuts to entitlement programs. The 2020 fiscal year budget, released last winter, and the 2019 fiscal year budget the year prior, had similar suggestions."

"But this budget proposal does come just a week after the president said he would protect these programs. 'We will always protect your Medicare and we will always protect your Social Security. Always,' he said during the State of the Union speech on Feb. 4." [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

#### **From the Hill:**

"When Trump released his first budget proposal, it projected that the deficit would fall to \$456 billion by 2021 and disappear by 2027. His administration brushed aside critiques that its projections were unrealistic and relied on overly optimistic economic projections. Monday's proposal put the 2021 deficit at nearly \$1 trillion, and Trump's White House is predicting that it will take 15 years to eliminate the deficit. It is still relying on the same cheerful economic predictions it has used in previous budgets, which are significantly higher than those projected by the Federal Reserve, the Congressional Budget Office and Wall Street banks."

"'Even with rosy economic assumptions and proposed spending discipline that flies in the face of recent experience, the president's budget would still be in deficit over the next 10 years,' said Robert L. Bixby, executive director of The Concord Coalition, which advocates for lowering the debt." [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

### **From CO:**

“The budget doesn’t balance. The government would run a deficit of \$966 billion in fiscal 2021, down slightly from the \$1 trillion it projects for the current fiscal year. And Trump offers no path to a balanced budget through 2030 even if he wins a second term, though annual deficits would steadily decline over the coming decade. By 2030, the deficit would be down to \$261 billion, if all White House policy changes were enacted.”

“The debt would get bigger. Trump, who once promised as a candidate to pay off the national debt in eight years, allows for the debt to keep growing under his budget plan. Debt held by the public would grow from nearly \$17.9 trillion this fiscal year to nearly \$23.9 trillion in 2030, even if all his cost-cutting proposals and economic assumptions come to fruition. As a share of the economy, however, the debt would become more manageable, gradually declining from 80.5 percent of the gross domestic product this fiscal year to 66.1 percent in 2030.” [\[02/11/2020\]](#)

### **From the New York Times:**

“President Trump’s budget proposals have been defined by a belief that the economy will grow significantly faster than most economists anticipate. The latest version, released on Monday, is a brief departure: It concedes, for the first time, that the administration’s past projections were too optimistic. Then it goes right back to forecasting 3 percent growth, for the better part of a decade.”

“The new budget forecasts a growth rate for the United States economy of 2.8 percent this year — or, by the metric the administration prefers to cite, a 3.1 percent rate. That is more than a half percentage point higher than forecasters at the Federal Reserve and the Congressional Budget Office predict.”

“It then predicts growth above 3 percent annually for the next several years if the administration’s economic policies are enacted. The Fed, the budget office and others all see growth falling below 2 percent annually in that time. By 2030, the administration predicts the economy will be more than 15 percent larger than forecasters at the budget office do.” [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

### **From ABC News:**

“Amid two global health crises, the Trump administration has proposed cutting \$3 billion from the U.S. government’s global health programs in its latest budget request... Other programs and positions have already been cut, with critics saying it leaves the U.S. less prepared to handle infectious disease outbreaks.

“But the budget request proposes reducing funding for global health programs from the \$9.1 billion Congress allocated for them in Fiscal Year 2020 to \$6 billion for FY 2021. That’s a drop even from the Trump administration’s budget proposal last year, which requested \$8.9 billion.

“The proposal would also cut funding to the World Health Organization by 53% and to the Pan American Health Organization by 75%.” [\[02/11/2020\]](#)

### **From The Hill:**

“President Trump’s proposed budget includes about \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act over a decade, analysts said...”

“‘I’m not going to cut Medicare or Medicaid,’ Trump said in 2015, adding, ‘Every other Republican is going to cut it.’” [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

**From Vanity Fair:**

“And if you guessed that when left entirely to his own devices, the president would gut spending for the most vulnerable members of the nation, you guessed right!”

“... Among the programs taking the biggest hit are Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, which would lose billions, and food stamp funding, which would be reduced by \$181 billion over a decade...” [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

**From Vox:**

“President Donald Trump posted a tweet on Saturday vowing that ‘We will not be touching your Social Security and Medicare in Fiscal 2021 Budget.’ One day later, the Wall Street Journal published a report indicating that Trump is doing exactly that with his budget proposal.” [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

**From Washington Post:**

“The budget would cut Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program and also wring savings from Medicare despite Trump’s repeated promises to safeguard Medicare and Social Security.” [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

**OPINION COLUMNS**

Columnists have denounced the budget as “tremendous fraud,” “reverse Robin-Hoodism,” and a “bad faith” exercise in partisanship:

**Washington Post Op-ed by Dana Milbank: Trump’s budget reveals a tremendous fraud**

“Trump’s budget is a tremendous fraud — and it lays tremendous waste to his promises.”

“Remember when he said he would eliminate the federal debt, or at least halve it, during his presidency? His new budget proposes to add another \$3.4 trillion by 2024 to the debt on top of the \$3 trillion Trump has already added, by piling on \$1-trillion-a-year budget deficits during a peacetime expansion. Under Trump’s latest plans, the debt would keep mushrooming until at least 2035 — by his administration’s own rosy projections.”

“Recall his repeated promises not to ‘touch’ Social Security and Medicare? Even as the elderly population swells, his budget calls for removing half a trillion dollars of funding from the Medicare program over 10 years, including \$135 billion from Medicare prescription drugs, and tens of billions from the Social Security program. In 2015, he promised not to touch Medicaid, either. Now he wants to cut it by \$920 billion. He was going to give Americans health care ‘much better’ than Obamacare. But he has proposed no such thing and now his budget calls for cutting spending on the program by \$844 billion.”

“Oh, and remember his vows that his tax cuts would grow the economy by 4 percent, 5 percent or even 6 percent? Last year it grew at 2.3 percent, and his new budget, even with the rosiest of assumptions, projects 2.8 percent for this year. Yet the budget would also devote another \$1.4 trillion to extending those tax cuts, primarily for the rich. A tremendous fraud, indeed.” [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

### **NY Times Op-ed by Paul Krugman: How Trump Got Tricked Down**

“One thing many people forget about the 2016 election is that as a candidate, Donald Trump promised to be a different kind of Republican. Unlike the mainstream of his party, he declared, he would raise taxes on the rich and wouldn’t cut programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid that ordinary Americans rely on. At the same time, he would invest large sums in rebuilding America’s infrastructure. He was lying... Trump’s only major legislative achievement, the 2017 Tax Cut and Jobs Act, was absolutely standard modern Republicanism: huge tax cuts for corporations, plus tax breaks that overwhelmingly benefited the wealthy...”

“Trump also came very close to passing a health care ‘reform’ that would have imposed savage cuts on Medicaid, eliminated protections for those with pre-existing conditions and taken away health insurance from more than 30 million Americans.”

“And there has, of course, been no infrastructure bill; in fact, the Trump administration’s repeated proclamations of ‘Infrastructure Week’ have become a running joke.”

“Policy wonks are still poring over the latest Trump budget, released on Monday, but there was no hiding the same reverse Robin-Hoodism as in previous budgets: taking from the poor and middle class while giving to the rich.” [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

### **LA Times Op-ed by Jon Healey: Trump just unveiled his latest budget. It screams bad faith**

“Imagine for a moment that two people running a business together have a dispute over where to invest their funds, so they strike a compromise and write it into their contract. For two years, they agree, a little more than half of the money will go toward plant and equipment, and the rest toward labor costs. A few months later, however, one of them says they’re borrowing too much, so he proposes to cut spending sharply — but just on labor. That’s a clear deal-breaker, right? And yet that’s exactly what President Trump is proposing to do in his latest budget: renege on the agreement he struck with congressional Democrats last July by cutting non-defense spending while continuing to increase the defense budget. The share dedicated to defense spending would grow steadily under Trump’s proposal, escalating from 53% this year to 55% in fiscal 2021 and 62% in fiscal 2030.” [\[02/11/2020\]](#)

### **Market Watch Op-ed by Paul Brandus: Trump’s election year gamble: Slashing the social safety net**

“President Trump is proposing cuts—in some cases big cuts—to Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and other parts of the social safety net... The plan, being rolled out in during what is expected to be a tight re-election bid for Trump, calls for \$4.4 trillion in overall spending cuts over the next decade. Of that, according to the White House budget office, Medicare would be cut by some \$850 billion over 10 years, Medicaid \$270 billion and Social Security \$30 billion... The proposals run counter to what the president said over the weekend, when he tweeted that the budget ‘will not be touching your Social Security or Medicare.’” [\[02/10/2020\]](#)

### **Washington Post Op-ed by Henry Olsen: Trump’s budget proposal shows how badly we need bipartisan compromise:**

“Trump’s plan wouldn’t even eliminate the deficit by 2030 even with rosy economic assumptions. His budget assumes the economy will grow by nearly 3 percent a year every year for the next decade. This

*Office of Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer, 2/12/20*

naturally increases tax revenue, which rises from 16.5 percent of GDP this fiscal year to 17.6 percent of GDP in FY 2030. But even this impossibly optimistic scenario combined with politically infeasible spending cuts leaves us with a budget deficit of \$261 billion, or 0.7 percent of GDP, in 2030... Dealing with the deficit is crucial to keeping the American Dream alive for those future citizens.” [\[02/11/2020\]](#)