

Murphy Votes against Budget that Ends Medicare to Give Exorbitant Tax Breaks to Wealthiest

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Contact: Kristen Bossi, 202-225-4476

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, the House Republican leadership brought to the floor their budget proposal, and Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) strongly opposed it because it would end Medicare as the nation knows it, harming seniors and the disabled, in order to give huge tax breaks to the wealthiest. The Republican budget ends the Medicare guarantee and replaces it with an underfunded voucher system where seniors go out into the private market to buy their own health insurance.

"This Republican budget punches gaping holes in the safety net for our seniors. Medicare has improved the quality of life and care for millions of Americans, and to dismantle it and replace it with a system that relies on the private market and underfunded vouchers just won't work and could have disastrous consequences for our nation," said Murphy.

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released its analysis of the Republican budget, and estimates that it would cause seniors' Medicare costs to more than double - if not nearly triple - in years to come. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, under the first year of the Republican plan, a 65 year old eligible for Medicare would pay nearly \$6,400 more than he or she would under today's Medicare program. CBO also confirms this plan means seniors will pay more for their prescription drugs, because it re-opens the donut hole.

"A return to the donut hole is absolutely absurd. Seniors who fell prey to this gap in coverage had to make choices no one should have to make - between food and medication, between housing and their health. Access to life saving drugs shouldn't be a luxury for our seniors," said Murphy.

The Republican budget also extends \$4 trillion in tax cuts, including all of President Bush's tax cuts for the wealthiest. While targeted tax relief is necessary to keep the economy moving and help small businesses grow, the cuts for the wealthiest come at the expense of support for low-income families, public health programs, and transportation upgrade priorities.

"This budget is completely out of whack with American principles. There is a better way to reduce the deficit that doesn't sacrifice the most vulnerable among us. To get our fiscal house in order, we've got to ask more of those that can afford it, and maintain a Medicare system that will provide financial and health security for our seniors," said Murphy.

Murphy voted for the Democratic budget alternative, which would have responsibly reduced the deficit while protecting Medicare and maintaining tax cuts for the middle class, while ending tax breaks for individuals making over \$200,000 and families making over \$250,000. A portion of the savings, \$309 billion, generated in the Democratic plan would come from phasing out our commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Democratic budget also restored cuts to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, an important program that assists thousands of Connecticut residents every year.

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