



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 17, 2015

## GOP Unveils Budget Proposal

Republicans in Congress have released their first [budget outline](#) since the GOP took control of Congress in November. The Republican blueprint calls for a number of ambitious moves, including significant changes to Medicare and increases in defense spending, and reiterates the GOP call for a complete repeal of ObamaCare.

The Blaze reports,

The introduction of the GOP's "balanced budget for a stronger America" will mark the start of budget season in Washington, that time of the year when several factions will lay out competing visions of what the next fiscal decade should look like for Washington. Several Democratic versions of a budget will also pop up, as will a proposal from the conservative Republican Study Committee, which will likely call for steeper cuts to get to balance more quickly.



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The Republicans claim that their budget would balance in less than a decade and would cut spending by over \$5 trillion. However, as noted by the *New York Times*, this timeline relies on projections that their policy changes will increase economic growth, thereby bringing in additional tax revenues.

House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price, Representative Paul Ryan's successor, released his budget on Tuesday, calling it "a plan to get Washington's fiscal house in order, promote a healthy economy, protect our nation and save and strengthen vital programs like Medicare."

Price asserts that the GOP budget would provide reassurance to companies that fear tax hikes will be the only solution offered to pay down the debt.

"We know that job creators and future entrepreneurs see today's large debt levels as tomorrow's likely tax hikes, interest rate increases, and inflationary pressures," Price said in an [op-ed for USA Today](#). "Through policies like fundamental tax reform, expanded energy production and the streamlining or outright elimination of unnecessary regulations, our budget would create an environment where folks can plan for the future with greater confidence and optimism."

Price's proposal showcases the Republicans' commitment to repeal and replace the healthcare law, a goal that seems to be increasingly difficult to attain as millions of Americans are now enrolled in ObamaCare.



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Price claims that a repeal would allow Congress a chance to “build a system that works for patients, families and physicians, not Washington.”

The blueprint states that ObamaCare would be repealed “in its entirety” and proposes to start from the beginning “with a patient centered approach to health care reform.”

Conservative groups are looking to hold the Republicans to their promise of repealing ObamaCare, and are not necessarily confident this will happen simply because of what is stated in the GOP proposal. “Republicans owe their majorities to their unwavering opposition to Obamacare, a reality that must be reflected in the budget,” declared Heritage Action. “A throwaway line that the budget ‘repeals Obamacare in its entirety’ is not enough.”

Last month, Republicans unveiled the GOP alternative to ObamaCare, but the “blueprint,” as congressional Republicans called it, mirrored much of what is found within the Affordable Care Act. Republicans stated that their proposed alternative is a work in progress. Entitled the Patient Choice, Affordability, Responsibility and Empowerment — or CARE — Act, the Republican alternative was drafted by Senator Richard Burr (R-N.C.), Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), and House Energy and Commerce Chairman Fred Upton (R-Mich.).

The proposal calls for a repeal of President Obama’s signature law, but retains many of the same provisions found within the Affordable Care Act. In fact, the Republican plan adopts so many of the fundamentals within Obama’s healthcare law that the *Washington Post* dubbed it “Obamacare Lite.”

Republicans have attempted to defend the similarities by stating that the goal was to avoid regression. “We agree we can’t return to the status quo of the pre-ObamaCare world, so we equip patients with tools that will drive down costs while also ensuring those with pre-existing conditions and the young are protected,” Hatch wrote in a statement.

In Price’s op-ed, he outlines the GOP’s vision to improve the healthcare system without ObamaCare:

We promote patient-centered health care by repealing all of Obamacare — the taxes, spending and mandates. This would end the [raid on Medicare](#) that was used to create this new entitlement, and it would allow Congress to start over on health care reform to build a system that works for patients, families and physicians, not Washington. At the same time, while making no changes for those in or near retirement, we propose needed improvements to Medicare so we save and strengthen this vital program. These structural reforms would give beneficiaries more choices and more access to affordable care.

Fox News elaborates on the GOP plan for Medicare:

House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price’s plan borrows heavily from prior GOP budgets, including a plan that would transform Medicare into a voucher-like “premium support” program for seniors joining Medicare in 2024 or later. They would receive a subsidy to purchase health insurance on the private market.

But some Senate Republicans, GOP aides say, have already indicated that they will not likely approve of any plan to dramatically change Medicare.

On Medicaid, Price’s proposal mirrors Representative Paul Ryan’s plan to cut Medicaid and food stamps by transitioning those programs from federal programs into state-run programs.

The GOP budget also includes an increase in defense spending, allocating \$94 billion to fight the “war on terror” in 2016, a \$43 billion increase from Obama’s request. The Republican plan also includes



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“emergency” war spending through the “overseas contingency operations” account, which does not count against the spending limits.

However, rifts are already beginning to appear in the Republican Party as lawmakers react to the budget proposal. Senator John McCain of Arizona, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said on Monday that he would not support any budget that does not explicitly remove defense spending caps. “At a time of growing worldwide threats, the sequestration-level caps on defense spending are putting our national security at unacceptable risk,” McCain said in a statement on Monday.

He indicated he would not accept increased defense spending through emergency accounts, a process to which Representative Ryan referred last year as “a backdoor loophole that undermines the integrity of the budget process.”

Price’s plan aims to give states more control over education funding, and to trim billions in waste and fraud, citing as an example the loophole that permits people to receive both unemployment and disability benefits simultaneously. Of course, every administration promises to cut fraud and waste, and very little ever comes of it because every dollar spent is backed by some legislator who is answering to the calls of lobbyists.



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