



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

Debra B. Whitman, Chair

December 16, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader
The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), a coalition of national non-profit organizations working on behalf of older adults, the undersigned groups urge you to oppose S. 2765, the Bipartisan Congressional Budget Reform Act.

While the bill makes laudable changes to the congressional budget process, it would create an automatic budget reconciliation process that could result in deep cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, Affordable Care Act health insurance subsidies, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – all mandatory programs that are critical to the health and income security of millions of older Americans.

S. 2765 would require that biennial budget resolutions include the level of debt as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) for each year covered by the budget resolution. In the second year of the budget resolution, an automatic budget reconciliation process would be triggered if the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) found that debt to GDP ratio had increased from the levels included in the budget resolution.

The Senate Budget Committee would be required to provide reconciliation instructions to the authorization committees to cut spending and/or increase revenue to ensure that debt ratio targets in the budget resolution are met. A budget reconciliation bill, containing the authorization committees' spending cuts and/or revenue increases, would be considered by the full Senate.

This automatic process would not consider the effect of economic downturns or changes in CBO assumptions – of which both could make the debt ratio appear worse. Triggering austerity during a weak economy would be particularly harmful to lower- and middle-income older adults who would already be struggling to pay for basic living expenses and out-of-pocket medical costs.

If the process included in S. 2765 had been law after the fiscal year 2018 budget resolution – used to facilitate the consideration of December 2017 tax cut legislation through the reconciliation process – CBO would have projected that \$3.0 trillion in 10-year deficit reduction was required. We are concerned that deficit reduction of this magnitude would result in devastating Medicare, Medicaid, health insurance subsidies, SSI and SNAP benefit cuts.

Given the economic and health insecurity that this bill is likely to cause for older Americans, the LCAO urges you to oppose the Bipartisan Congressional Budget Reform Act and ensure that it is not included in any larger package of end of year legislation.

Sincerely,

The undersigned organizations

AARP
AFSCME
Aging Life Care Association
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Geriatrics Society
American Society on Aging
Association for Gerontology and Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Association of Service Coordinators
Caring Across Generations
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Families USA
Justice in Aging
Lutheran Services in America
Meals on Wheels America
Medicare Rights Center
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Association for Home Care and Hospice
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
National Association of RSVP Directors
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Caucus and Center on Black Aging
National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare
National Consumer Voice
National Council on Aging
National Senior Corps Association
Service Employees International Union
Social Security Works
The Gerontological Society of America
The Jewish Federations of North America

cc: Members of the Senate and House