



Toward Common Ground

2020

Bridging the
Political Divide with
Deficit Reduction
Recommendations for
Congress



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With public debate around important issues often dominated by special interests pursuing their own narrow agendas, U.S. PIRG Education Fund offers an independent voice that works on behalf of the public interest. U.S. PIRG Education Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization, works to protect consumers and promote good government. We investigate problems, craft solutions, educate the public, and offer meaningful opportunities for civic participation. For more information about U.S. PIRG Education Fund or for additional copies of this report, please visit www.uspirgedfund.org.

National Taxpayers Union Foundation (NTUF)

NTUF is a nonpartisan research and educational organization, dedicated to showing Americans how taxes, government spending, and regulations affect them. Through difference-making data, analysis, and commentary, we empower citizens to engage in the critical policy debates of our time – and hold elected officials accountable. For more information about NTUF or for additional copies of this report, please visit ntu.org/foundation.

Executive Summary

To break through the ideological divide that too often frames unproductive policy debates, and to offer a pathway that can address the nation's fiscal problems, NTUF and U.S. PIRG Education Fund joined together to identify mutually acceptable deficit reduction measures. This report documents our findings.

What follows is a general summary of recommendations that fall into four broad categories:

1. \$62 billion in savings from ending wasteful subsidies,
2. \$422 billion from addressing outdated or ineffective military programs,
3. \$143 billion from improving program execution and government operations, and
4. \$170 billion from reforming the operation of entitlement programs.

Each specific recommendation includes an estimate of its savings over the next ten years, and a reference to the source from which the estimate was drawn.

Introduction

Heading into 2020, the nation already faced serious fiscal challenges. In January, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) forecast that this year's deficit would exceed \$1 trillion, increasing the publicly-held federal debt load to nearly \$18 trillion. Over the next ten years, CBO's baseline projection saw the debt rising to \$31 trillion.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has upended the forecasts. Congress came together quickly to enact a series of bipartisan legislative packages to address the health care emergency and the economic fallout. As these immediate challenges are subdued, Congress will again need to set aside political differences and work together to restore the budget to a sustainable path.

It is in this spirit that National Taxpayers Union Foundation (NTUF) and U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG) Education Fund have joined together to propose a list to Congress of more than 50 recommendations to reform the future spending commitments of our nation. If enacted in their entirety, these changes would save taxpayers more than \$790 billion over the next decade.

Our organizations may differ about what constitutes a proper regulatory and tax system, but we are united in the belief that the federal government spends in ways that are not fiscally sustainable, and are often detrimental to the interests of the American people. For NTUF, out-of-control entitlement spending, fueled by demographic changes, is a particular concern. For U.S. PIRG, of particular concern is spending that threatens public health, causes environmental damage or wastes taxpayer dollars through corruption or inefficiency.

Within this project, we mutually identify areas of wasteful, cronyistic, and excessive spending that plague our federal budget. We hope that these bipartisan spending cuts and reforms will (1) provide Congress with a number of examples of spending reductions that can at least marginally help rein in federal spending, and (2) show that there are areas of agreement that bridge ideological divides if only we seek them out.

The recommendations in “Toward Common Ground 2020” touch nearly every portion of federal expenditures, including entitlements, defense spending, wasteful subsidies, and a broad range of improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of discretionary programs. They include large items, such as a \$195 billion reform of the Department of Defense’s operations and maintenance budget, and relatively small ones, like \$4 million in savings from limiting the pensions and perks provided to former presidents. The proposals are specific, detailed, and actionable items that Congress and the administration could pursue right now to reduce spending and ensure stability for America’s long-term budget.



Methodology

Every recommendation, unless otherwise noted, includes a 10-year savings estimate backed by sources such as the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), Government Accountability Office (GAO), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), government agencies such as the Department of Defense, or nonpartisan working groups. All cost savings cite the most recent updated sources. All other major calculations are included in the footnotes.

Improving Program Execution and Government Operations

Payment errors, duplicative programs, and inefficient processes combine to squander tens of billions of taxpayer dollars every year. Taking a comprehensive approach to streamlining the operation of these myriad functions could not only spare taxpayers additional expense, but also improve the quality of services they receive. If enacted in their entirety, these 17 recommendations could save as much as \$143 billion over the next decade.

Savings Mechanism	Explanation	Savings (\$ in millions)	Source	Link for Additional Information
If Congress were to enact all 17 recommendations, it would save taxpayers \$143 billion over the next decade.				
End Livestock Protection Program	The Livestock Protection Program funds efforts to eradicate natural predators of livestock. This should be paid for with private dollars.	\$1,170	USDA	https://www.obpa.usda.gov/budsum/fy2021budsum.pdf
Eliminate the Commerce Department's International Trade Administration	This option suggests the total elimination of the International Trade Administration (ITA) under the Department of Commerce. The ITA offers taxpayer-funded subsidies to businesses that will then promote products overseas. Besides the fact that both the Department of Agriculture and the Department of State do something similar, the ITA also promotes protectionist trade policies like antidumping and countervailing duty laws. The International Buyer Program (IBP) under ITA is a taxpayer-funded recruitment program for foreign buyers, sales reps, and business partners to trade shows in the U.S. This is also federal overreach into a private matter.	\$5,100	Heritage Foundation, Budget	https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/BlueprintforBalance_AFederalBudgetforFY2020.pdf , https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-02/FY_2021_DOC_BiB-021020.pdf
Eliminate the Asia Foundation	The Asia Foundation is a private, non-governmental organization founded in 1954. It is highly unusual for private organizations to receive a direct appropriation with no direct oversight.	\$190	FY 2021 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/msar_fy21.pdf
Eliminate the East-West Center	The East-West Center is a private, non-governmental organization founded in 1960. It is highly unusual for private organizations to receive a direct appropriation with no direct oversight.	\$167	FY 2019 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/msar-fy2019.pdf , https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FY-2021-CBJ-Final.pdf
Reform U.S. Mint's Composition of Metal in Coinage	Adopts Senator Ernst's CENTS Acts, giving Treasury Department authority to change composition of nickel, dime, quarter, and half dollar coins. Over the past decade, U.S. Mint has conducted three separate studies to identify less costly metal alloys in these coins. The Mint asked for the authority to change the composition of coins in their FY19 budget justification. A March 2019 GAO report also recommended this authority to allow for savings.	\$150	Senator Ernst's CENTS Act proposal	https://www.ernst.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/307d1159-ca95-40f8-9256-9b06fb43b9c5/9DAFC821CEBF98B7EDB888B73E84DCEC.cents-act-one-pager.pdf

Eliminate the International Education and Foreign Language Studies Domestic and Overseas Programs	Grants are awarded to institutions of higher education to support centers, programs, and fellowships to increase the number of experts in foreign languages and international studies, meet national needs, and strengthen the teaching and research of foreign languages and international education at all levels. While there is critical need for our nation to have a readily available pool of international, regional, and advanced language experts for economic, foreign affairs, and national security purposes, it is unclear that this goal is consistent with the Department's core mission. Other Federal agencies, whose primary missions are national security, implement similar programs and are better equipped to support this critical objective. Therefore, the elimination of these duplicative programs is ideal. These programs are authorized by the Higher Education Act (HEA), which has not been reauthorized since the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act. Authorization of the HEA expired in 2014.	\$760	FY 2021 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/msar_fy21.pdf
Eliminate the DOE Office of Nuclear Energy	This option suggests the total elimination of the Office of Nuclear Energy within the Department of Energy. The office is meant to advance nuclear power in the United States and addresses issues related to nuclear energy like cost, security, regulation, etc. The entire function of nuclear energy is not an appropriate role of government and should be left to the private sector. Research and development operations should be consolidated within the Office of Science.	\$6,670	Heritage Foundation, Blueprint for Balance	https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2021-APP/pdf/BUDGET-2021-APP-1-7.pdf
Eliminate Transportation Security Administration Exit Lane Staffing	This proposal would shift responsibility for staffing exit points to prevent re-entry in secure areas of airports to the airport operators. This would enable the Transportation Security Administration to focus on screening at the entry points.	\$840	FY 2021 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/msar_fy21.pdf
Eliminate Transportation Security Administration Law Enforcement Grants	The amount of financial support offered by this program has waned in recent years, declining below 50 percent of total state and local law enforcement costs in 2016 and continuing to decline. As such, state and local jurisdictions are supporting much more of the cost of providing law enforcement presence at airports. Discontinuing this program would not place an undue burden on state and local jurisdictions, since they already pay the majority of law enforcement costs.	\$460	FY 2021 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/msar_fy21.pdf
Granting IRS Authority to Collect Information Needed by Social Security Administration (SSA) on Government Pension Income	Social Security needs data on pensions from noncovered earnings to better enforce offsets and ensure benefit fairness, estimated to result in \$2.4-\$7.9 billion savings over 10 years if enforced both retrospectively and prospectively. If Social Security only enforced the offsets prospectively, the overall savings would be less as it would not reduce benefits already received.	\$2,400	GAO	https://www.gao.gov/duplication/action_tracker/Social_Security_Offsets_%282011-80%29/action1

Eliminate Certain Payments in Abandoned Mine Restoration Program	The Abandoned Mine Restoration Program makes “unrestricted” grants to states and tribes that have already been certified as completing restoration efforts. As a result, funding has been used for unrelated projects.	\$1,150	OMB	https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2021-MSV/pdf/BUDGET-2021-MSV.pdf
Eliminate Funding for the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars	This option suggests the total elimination of federal funding towards the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (WWICS). Funding for think-tank research should be a private matter. The WWICS can already survive without federal funds, so those funds should be rescinded.	\$60	FY 2021 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/msar_fy21.pdf
Eliminate Regional Commissions: Delta Regional Authority, Denali Commission, and Northern Border Regional Commission	These commissions are independent agencies that award federal grants for regional development by funding infrastructure projects, workforce and economic development activities, and local capacity building efforts. The majority of these regional commissions’ activities are duplicative of other Federal programs, and their funding is set aside for special geographical designations rather than applied across the country based on objective criteria indicating local areas’ levels of distress. For example, the rationale for a unique and additional federal subsidy to Alaska is difficult to justify given that the State of Alaska’s oil revenues allow it to pay an annual dividend (\$1,884 in 2017) to each of its residents. Finally, the commissions’ effectiveness at improving overall economic conditions in these areas remains unproven.	\$610	FY 2021 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/msar_fy21.pdf
Reform Operations of U.S. Postal Service to Centralize Business Mail Delivery	Adopts H.R. 756’s proposal to require USPS to convert most business (but not residential) addresses with door delivery to sidewalk, curbside, or centralized delivery. This would affect about 1/6 of business addresses, being converted to centralized delivery for the businesses.	\$1,955	CBO Cost Estimate	https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/115th-congress-2017-2018/costestimate/hr756.pdf
Discontinue Payments to Air Carriers Under the Essential Air Service Program	Created in 1978 as a temporary transition to a free-market aviation system, Essential Air Service persists to this day, and provides subsidies for air services in rural areas. The program funds service for dozens of facilities servicing fewer than 10 passengers per day, or are within easy driving distance of major airports.	\$1,500	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Limit Highway and Transit Funding to Expected Revenues	This option would reduce federal funding for highways and mass transit, starting in fiscal year 2021, by lowering the obligation limitations for highway and transit programs supported by the Highway Trust Fund to the amount of revenues projected to be credited to the fund. The federal taxes that directly fund the Highway Trust Fund would not change. (The option would not affect highway spending that is exempt from the limitations on obligations; Congressional Budget Office projects \$739 million per year in such spending.)	\$116,000	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Eliminate Airport Improvement Program Discretionary Grants	This grant program was established in 2018 and is duplicative of other airport maintenance funding through the Federal Aviation Administration.	\$4,000	FY 2021 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/msar_fy21.pdf

Addressing Outdated or Ineffective Military Programs

While a strong national defense is necessary, it is equally clear that the Department of Defense (DoD) has a number of programs that do not advance this goal, and instead waste vital resources. As the largest portion of the “discretionary” budget, and about 18 percent of the total federal budget, it stands to reason that prudently examining DoD’s funding and priorities could generate significant savings for taxpayers. Due to the delicate nature of decisions relating to national security, we have relied on authoritative recommendations from officials and independent experts from across the political spectrum to guide this part of our report. Following these 14 recommendations to carefully reform or eliminate certain weapons programs and make other procedural improvements could save taxpayers as much as \$422 billion over the next decade.

Savings Mechanism	Explanation	Savings (\$ in millions)	Source	Link for Additional Information
If Congress were to enact all 14 recommendations, it would save taxpayers \$422 billion over the next decade.				
Reduce DoD's Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Appropriation (Excluding Funding for the Defense Health Program) by Freezing O&M's Budget Authority for Five Years and Then Limit Its Growth to the Rate of Inflation	DoD's O&M appropriation in the base budget (excluding funding for the Defense Health Program) for 2020 through 2023 would equal the amount that the department requested in its budget for 2019. That portion of the budget would grow with inflation from 2024 through 2028.	\$195,000	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
OR				
Reduce DoD's Operation and Maintenance Appropriation (Excluding Funding for the Defense Health Program) by Limiting the Growth of O&M's Budget Authority to the Rate of Inflation	DoD's O&M appropriation in the base budget (excluding funding for the Defense Health Program) would grow with inflation from the 2019 amount throughout the entire 10-year period.	\$70,000	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667

Replace Some Military Personnel with Civilian Employees	Under this option, DoD would replace over four years 80,000 of the roughly 340,000 active-duty military personnel in commercial jobs with 64,000 civilian employees. As a result, active-duty end strength (the number of military personnel on the rolls on the final day of the fiscal year) would decrease by 80,000.	\$14,200	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Cancel Plans to Purchase Additional F-35 Joint Strike Fighters and Instead Purchase F-16s and F/A-18s	Under this option, DoD would halt further production of the F-35 and instead purchase the most advanced versions of older, nonstealthy fighter aircraft that are still in production. Through 2028, the Air Force would purchase 510 F-16 Fighting Falcons, and the Navy and Marine Corps would purchase 394 F/A-18 Super Hornets. Those purchases would occur on the same schedule as that currently in place for the F-35s. The services would continue to operate the 429 F-35s that have already been purchased.	\$12,800	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Stop Building Ford Class Aircraft Carriers	Under this option, the Navy would stop building new aircraft carriers after completion of the third of its modern Ford class carriers, the Enterprise, which lawmakers authorized in 2018 and which is expected to be completed in 2027. Thus, plans to start building the fourth Ford class carrier in 2023 would be canceled, as would the Navy's plans to purchase additional carriers in subsequent years. (Under its current 30-year shipbuilding plan, the Navy would purchase a new carrier every four or five years. Because those ships are expensive and take a long time to build, the Congress appropriates funds for construction over eight years, beginning two years before a ship is authorized for purchase by the Congress. Funding for the Enterprise began in 2016.)	\$9,900	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Reduce Funding for Naval Ship Construction to Historical Levels	This option would decrease budget authority for naval ship construction to the 30-year average in real (inflation-adjusted) terms.	\$49,700	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Reduce the Size of the Nuclear Triad to Retain a Nuclear Triad with 10 Submarines, 300 ICBMs, and 1,550 Warheads	This option would reduce the costs of modernization by retiring some existing delivery systems early and by purchasing fewer of the new systems. It would still allow the United States to retain the strategic benefits provided by the complementary roles of the triad's three components, but would keep U.S. forces at the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) limit of 1,550 warheads.	\$7,500	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
OR				

Reduce the Size of the Nuclear Triad to Retain a Nuclear Triad with 8 Submarines, 150 ICBMs, and 1,000 Warheads	This option further reduces the number of deployed warheads to 1,000.	\$8,900	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Cancel the Long-Range Standoff Weapon	This option would cancel the Long-Range Standoff Weapon (LRSO) but retain the B61-12 Life Extension Program (LEP). Thus, the Air Force would stop equipping bombers with cruise missiles armed with nuclear warheads after the current air-launched cruise missiles (ACLM's) reached the end of their service life (around 2030). Specifically, DoD would cancel development and production of the LRSO, and DOE would cancel development and production of the associated warhead. Aircraft that are capable of carrying nuclear bombs would still be able to do so. This option would not change the planned size of the strategic bomber fleet or its ability to conduct nonnuclear missions.	\$11,000	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Defer Development of the B-21 Bomber	This option would defer development of the B-21 bomber until after 2028.	\$31,800	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Reduce the Size of the Bomber Force by Retiring the B-1B	This option would retire the entire the B-1B bomber fleet in 2020.	\$16,500	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Reduce the Size of the Fighter Force by Retiring the F-22	This option would retire the entire F-22 fleet in October 2019. The aircraft would be flown to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona, where they would be put into long-term preservation and storage.	\$26,700	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Cancel the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense System	This option would cancel the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system and its support efforts, including the Improved Homeland Defense Interceptors, Common Kill Vehicle, and Multi-Object Kill Vehicle programs. The option would not affect the overarching command-and-control or sensor programs that support other missile defense systems.	\$17,700	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667

<p>Cancel Development and Production of the New Missile in the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent Program</p>	<p>Under this option, the new missile portion of the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) program would be canceled, and the IW program would be replaced with less complex life-extension programs (LEPs) on the Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBM) warheads (the W76 and the W88). The current Minuteman III missiles, along with their W78 and W87 warheads, would continue to operate until they reached the end of their operational lifetime. Refurbishment of the silos, command-and-control systems, and other support equipment would continue as planned under the GBSD program.</p>	<p>\$24,300</p>	<p>CBO Budget Options, December 2018</p>	<p>https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667</p>
<p>Combine Military Exchanges and Commissaries and Reduce Commissary Subsidies</p>	<p>This option suggests the combination of the Military Exchanges and Commissaries under the Department of Defense. These programs are parallel but similar and are charged with providing access to goods and services for servicemembers and their families. The exchanges are self-sufficient, but the commissaries are dependent upon an annual subsidy. Combining these programs would make them more efficient and reduce costs, dependent on the DoD performing accurate cost-benefit analysis for these programs.</p>	<p>\$2,700</p>	<p>DoD Report</p>	<p>https://media.defense.gov/2019/Aug/21/2002173783/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-REPORT-ON-THE-DEVELOPMENT-OF-A-SINGLE-DEFENSE-RESALE-SYSTEM.PDF</p>
<p>Reduce DoD Printing/Reproduction Costs by 10%</p>	<p>The Department of Defense (DoD) reported spending an annual average of \$608 million on document services, such as printing, copying, and related activities, during fiscal years 2010 through 2015, prompting calls from Congress and the Administration to reduce these costs. Yet, outlays are estimated to rise to \$753 million in FY 2020.</p>	<p>\$753</p>	<p>GAO, DoD</p>	<p>https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/694957.pdf, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2021-APP/pdf/BUDGET-2021-APP-1-7.pdf</p>

Reform of Federal Subsidy Programs

Every year, the federal government hands out billions of dollars in subsidies for a wide variety of activities, often best described as commercial in nature. Though some of these programs may be well-intentioned efforts to provide targeted support to businesses or individuals, in practice they are a poor use of taxpayer dollars, and often fail to achieve their stated objectives. This section recommends spending reductions that focus primarily on “corporate welfare” programs, inefficient agricultural supports, and spending on energy development. If Congress were to enact all 16 recommendations, it would save taxpayers \$62 billion over the next decade.

Savings Mechanism	Explanation	Savings (\$ in millions)	Source	Link for Additional Information
If Congress were to enact all 16 recommendations, it would save taxpayers \$62 billion over the next decade.				
Eliminate Title I Agriculture Programs	Beginning with the 2024 marketing year, this option would eliminate all Title I commodity support programs.	\$19,700	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
OR				
Limit ARC and PLC payment acres to 30 percent of base acres	Limiting payment to 30 percent of base acres decreases the unfair advantage that larger, more established farms with base acres have over farms that do not have base acres.	\$10,000	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Eliminate the USDA Market Access Program	This option suggests the total elimination of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Market Access Program, a subsidy for trade associations, businesses, and other private entities to help them market and promote their product overseas.	\$1,768	Heritage Foundation, Blueprint for Balance	https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/BlueprintforBalance_AFederalBudgetforFY2020.pdf , https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/market-access-program-map/map-funding-allocations-fy-2020
Eliminate Marketing Loan Assistance Program	Through a complicated mechanism, the Marketing Loan Assistance Program provides cash payments to agribusinesses when crop prices drop below a government-guaranteed floor. This is little more than an elaborate subsidy for agribusinesses.	\$536	Green Scissors report, updated with CBO data.	http://greenscissors.taxpayer.net/programs/category/marketing-assistance-loans , https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2019-05/51317-2019-05-usda_0.pdf
Timber Purchaser Election Road Construction	The Timber Purchaser Election Road Construction program builds public roads and bridges, so that small business can transport timber off their privately-owned land. Businesses that purchase construction through the program are charged less than the cost of building the infrastructure and the difference is covered by taxpayers. These businesses should construct their own infrastructure without taxpayer support.	\$20	Green Scissors Report, USDA	http://www.greenscissors.com/program/timber-purchaser-election-road-construction/ , https://www.obpa.usda.gov/27forest2021notes.pdf

Eliminate Foreign Market Development Program	These programs provide funding for various activities to promote trade and exports, such as paying for private advertising abroad. Though well-intended, these programs often fund profitable companies or their trade associations. Taxpayers should not be bearing the cost of their export promotions.	\$270	Department of Agriculture	https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/foreign-market-development-program-fmd/fmd-funding-allocations-fy-2020
Eliminate the Commerce Department's Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership	This option suggests the total elimination of the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (HMEP) within the Commerce Department. The HMEP is a federally funded management consulting operation directed at manufacturers. This is federal overreach as businesses should not receive development funds or advice from the government.	\$141	FY 2021 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/msar_fy21.pdf
Eliminate the Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration	This option suggests the total elimination of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) under the Department of Commerce. The EDA is a taxpayer-funded grant and investment program that sends money to public and private endeavors in economically distressed areas. There is narrow benefit to this program and other economic development programs exist for the same purpose and same target populations.	\$2,850	FY 2021 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/msar_fy21.pdf
Reduce Funding for Nuclear Energy Research, Development, and Demonstration	This option would reduce funding for technology development and demonstration in nuclear energy programs to roughly 25 percent of their 2018 amounts. The reduction would be phased in over three years: Funding would be reduced by 25 percent in 2020, 50 percent in 2021, and the full amount of the cuts (75 percent) in 2022 and thereafter. This option would reduce the Department of Energy's (DOE) efforts to support the later stages of technology development and the demonstration of commercial feasibility but would not alter DOE's support of basic and early applied research, which is carried out primarily through the department's Office of Science.	\$4,700	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Eliminate the DOE Office of Fossil Energy	This option suggests the total elimination of the Office of Fossil Energy within the Department of Energy. This office has been used to research and develop technologies that will reduce CO2 emissions, authorize imports and exports of natural gas, manage the government-controlled stockpile of oil known as the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, etc. All research should be privatized, restrictions on trade should be removed, and use the stockpile for actual emergency purposes and not political purposes.	\$7,500	Heritage Foundation, Blueprint for Balance	https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/BlueprintforBalance_AFederalBudgetforFY2020.pdf , https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2020/02/f71/doe-fy2021-summary-table-by-organization_0.pdf
OR				

Reduce Funding for DOE Fossil Energy Research, Development, and Demonstration	This option would reduce funding for technology development and demonstration in fossil energy to roughly 25 percent of their 2018 amounts. The reduction would be phased in over three years: Funding would be reduced by 25 percent in 2020, 50 percent in 2021, and the full amount of the cuts (75 percent) in 2022 and thereafter. This option would reduce the DOE's efforts to support the later stages of technology development and the demonstration of commercial feasibility but would not alter DOE's support of basic and early applied research, which is carried out primarily through the department's Office of Science.	\$3,000	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Eliminate Fuel Cycle Research and Development	This program provides grants of taxpayer money for research and development of nuclear technologies and waste management that should be conducted with private dollars.	\$3,051	Green Scissors Report, Department of Energy	http://www.greenscissors.com/program/fuel-cycle-research-development/ , https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2020/02/f72/doe-fy2021-budget-volume-3-part-2_2.pdf
Nuclear Energy Enabling Technologies	This program provides grants of taxpayer money for research and development of nuclear technologies that should be conducted with private dollars.	\$1,135	Green Scissors Report, Department of Energy	http://www.greenscissors.com/program/fuel-cycle-research-development/ , https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2020/02/f72/doe-fy2021-budget-volume-3-part-2_2.pdf
Halt Mixed Oxide - Fissile Materials Dispositions - Construction	The National Nuclear Security Administration is funding the construction of a facility to blend surplus weapons-grade plutonium with depleted uranium oxide for production of mixed oxide fuel to use in existing nuclear power plants. The nuclear industry, not taxpayers, should fund the production of fuel suitable for power production.	\$2,200	Department of Energy	https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2020/03/f72/doe-fy2021-budget-volume-1_2.pdf
Eliminate the Export-Import Bank	This option suggests the total elimination of the Export-Import Bank. The Ex-Im Bank provides taxpayer funded subsidies to foreign firms and governments that purchase American exports. This program is an example of cronyism, where large corporations that have the ability to lobby the government for subsidies have an advantage against other American firms that do not have these abilities. Taxpayers must deal with the losses that the bank fails to cover with reserves, and the cost assumption that Ex-Im uses is flawed because it doesn't account for default risks.	\$57	Heritage Foundation, Blueprint for Balance, Ex-Im Budget Justification	https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/BlueprintforBalance_AFederalBudgetforFY2020.pdf , https://www.exim.gov/sites/default/files/oig/fy-2021-exim-oig-cbj.pdf
Adoption of H.R. 1496, Presidential Allowance Modernization Act of 2019	H.R. 1496 would decrease the pensions of former Presidents and effectively eliminate their allowances for staff, office space, and related expenses. The bill would apply only to Presidents who leave office after the date of enactment. Under current law, Presidents who leave office will receive an annual pension of between \$220,000 and \$280,000. The bill would reduce those amounts, which are considered direct spending, by about \$20,000 in each year over the 2019-2029 period.	\$4	CBO Cost Estimate	https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2019-04/hr1496.pdf

Eliminate U.S. Trade and Development Agency	The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (TDA) main programmatic focus is to support U.S. private sector participation in infrastructure projects in middle-income countries. However, many of these projects would likely proceed without TDA support and could thus be supported by the private sector without government involvement. Business looking to invest in emerging markets are incentivized to do so and should rely on private sector financing. In general, the United States should not provide taxpayer subsidies except in rare situations, such as when limited support is needed to offset inappropriate subsidies that disadvantage U.S. businesses.	\$680	FY 2021 Budget: Major Savings and Reforms	https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/msar_fy21.pdf
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Reforming the Operation of Entitlement Programs

Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security combined comprise over 50% of the federal budget. As a result, their expenditures deserve close scrutiny. Giving program administrators greater access to technology and other tools to root out fraud and improper payments could yield tremendous savings, and lead to more efficient programs for patients and beneficiaries. The four recommendations in the section, if taken together, could save taxpayers as much as \$170 billion over the next decade.

Savings Mechanism	Explanation	Savings (\$ in millions)	Source	Link for Additional Information
If Congress were to enact all 4 recommendations, it would save taxpayers \$170 billion over the next decade.				
Modify how Risk Scores are Constructed	Two changes would be made the risk-adjustment policy: (1) Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would be required to use two years of diagnostic data to calculate risk scores (currently using 1 year). Empirically, using two years would result in more diagnoses being captured among Fee-for-Service (FFS) beneficiaries. This would reduce the gap between average Medicare Advantage risk scores and average FFS risk scores. (2) Risk scores would no longer reflect diagnoses captured from health risk assessments, which help determine beneficiary's health needs and sets a course for treatment. Medicare Advantage assessments are more likely to record a diagnosis for which a beneficiary receives no subsequent care. Excluding these diagnoses recorded only during health risk assessments would therefore further reduce the disparity between FFS and Medicare Advantage risk scores.	\$67,200	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
OR				
Modify Payments to Medicare Advantage Plans for Health Risk by Increasing the Minimum Risk Reduction from 5.9 Percent to 8 Percent Scaled by Insurer and Region	This option would also require the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to increase the reduction from 5.9 percent to 8 percent, though the reductions would be scaled--meaning some could be more than 8 percent and others could be less than 8 percent--based on the differences in coding intensity for each insurer in a given region.	\$47,000	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667

Provide Authority to Expand Competitive Bidding for Certain Durable Medical Equipment	The Competitive Bidding Program is currently restricted to certain categories of equipment, supplies, and services. The proposal would expand the program to include ventilators and orthotics. However, ventilator procurement in the current COVID-19 emergency should follow whatever steps are necessary to save lives.	\$6,100	HHS	https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2020-budget-in-brief.pdf
Reduce Quality Bonus Payments to Medicare Advantage Plans by Eliminating Medicare Advantage Benchmark Increases that are Tied to Quality Scores	This option would eliminate benchmark increases that are tied to quality scores starting in 2021. The effect of a plan's quality score on rebates would continue as under current law, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would continue to publish quality information for the benefit of consumers.	\$94,200	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
OR				
Reduce Quality Bonus Payments to Medicare Advantage Plans by Eliminating Double Bonuses from Medicare Advantage Benchmarks	This option would eliminate double bonuses from Medicare Advantage benchmarks. Higher-quality plans in those counties would still be paid bonuses under the second alternative, but the maximum increase to the benchmark would be 5 percent rather than 10 percent. The effect of a plan's quality score on rebates would continue as under current law, and CMS would continue to publish quality information for the benefit of consumers.	\$18,200	CBO Budget Options, December 2018	https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54667
Offset Disability Insurance (DI) Benefits for any Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefits Received in the Same Period	Congress should consider passing legislation to prevent individuals from collecting both full Disability Insurance benefits and Unemployment Insurance benefits that cover the same period, which could save \$2.45 billion over 10 years in the Social Security Disability Insurance program according to the Office of Management and Budget.	\$2,450	GAO	https://www.gao.gov/duplication/action_tracker/Disability_and_Unemployment_Benefits_%282014-08%29/action1

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