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CBPP STATEMENT

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House Republican Budget Reflects Disturbing Vision for the Country

Statement of Sharon Parrott, CBPP President, on House Budget Committee Chair Arrington's budget resolution released today:

It's tempting to ignore a budget resolution released just days before the start of the fiscal year that it's meant to guide, and amid the chaotic debate around a short-term extension of government funding to avoid a shutdown. But House Budget Committee Chair Jodey Arrington's proposed budget is important for what it illustrates about House Republicans' disturbing vision for the country: health care stripped away from millions of people, higher poverty and hunger, capitulation to climate change, more tax cheating by high-income people, and large-scale disinvestment from the building blocks of opportunity and economic growth — from medical research to education to child care. It would narrow opportunity, worsen racial inequities, and make it harder for people to afford the basics. It reflects the wrong priorities for the country and should be roundly rejected.

Chair Arrington made clear in his remarks the intent to extend the expiring tax cuts from the 2017 tax law, which included large tax cuts for the wealthy. In addition, the budget resolution itself would pave the way for unlimited, unpaid-for tax cuts that could go well beyond those extensions. The extensions alone would give annual tax breaks averaging \$41,000 to tax filers in the top 1 percent and cost more than \$350 billion a year, the Congressional Budget Office estimates. The budget reflects none of these costs and fails to explain how — or whether — they will be offset.

A shocking share of the spending cuts Chair Arrington specifies target people with low and moderate incomes, including \$1.9 trillion in Medicaid cuts and hundreds of billions in cuts to economic security programs, such as cuts to assistance that helps people afford food and other basic needs. Just last week the Census Bureau released data showing that poverty spiked last year, more than doubling for children. Rather than proposing policies that could reverse this deeply troubling trend, the budget proposal would deepen poverty and increase hardship.

The budget would also make deep cuts in the part of the budget that is funded annually through appropriations bills. Disingenuously, the budget resolution shows that these cuts total more than \$4 trillion over ten years — but hides the program areas that would be cut, labeling them “government-wide savings.” But this year's House Appropriations bills — which include substantial cuts — make

clear that cuts would fall on a wide range of basic functions and services that support families, communities, and the broader economy, including Social Security customer service, support for K-12 and college education, funding for national parks and clean air and water, rental housing assistance for families with low incomes, and more.

Chair Arrington claims the budget's deep and damaging program cuts are in the name of deficit reduction. But the failure to identify a single revenue increase for high-income people or corporations — and in fact, to potentially shower them with more unpaid-for tax cuts — is an extreme and misguided approach. Moreover, calling for a balanced budget in ten years is merely a slogan that has little to do with addressing our nation's needs — and the budget resolution resorts to gimmicks and games to even appear to get there, including \$3 trillion in deficit reduction it claims would accrue from higher economic growth it assumes would be achieved by budget policies.

A budget plan should focus on the nation's needs and lay out an agenda that broadens opportunity, invests in people and families, reduces the too-high levels of hardship and financial stress faced by households across the country, and raises revenues for those investments. But the Arrington budget blueprint would shortchange much-needed investments and lock in wasteful tax cuts to the already wealthy for the next decade.

House Republicans are pursuing a damaging agenda at every turn — first threatening the nation with default, and now demanding deep cuts in an array of priorities in this year's appropriations debate, risking a government shutdown, and proposing a budget blueprint that would take the country in the wrong direction.

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