

TRUMPS \$4.4 TRILLION PLAN

# Budget balloons deficits, cuts social safety net

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Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump unveiled a \$4.4 trillion budget plan Monday that envisions steep cuts to America's social safety net but mounting spending on the military, formally retreating from last year's promises to balance the federal budget.

The president's spending outline for the first time acknowledges that the Republican tax overhaul passed last year would add billions to the deficit and not "pay for itself" as Trump and his Republican allies asserted. If enacted as proposed, though no presidential budget ever is, the plan would establish an era of \$1 trillion-plus yearly deficits.

The open embrace of red ink is a remarkable public reversal for Trump and his party, which spent years objecting to President Barack Obama's increased spending during the depths of the Great Recession. Rhetoric aside, however, Trump's pattern is in line with past Republican presidents who have overseen spikes in deficits as they simultaneously increased military spending and cut taxes.

Here's a look at what's funded in the budget and what isn't:

**International space station**

The Trump administration wants NASA out of the International Space Station by 2025 and to have private businesses running the place instead.

Under Trump's 2019 proposed budget, U.S. government funding for the space station would end by 2025. The government would set aside \$150 million to encourage commercial development.

Many space experts are expressing concern. Sen. Bill Nelson, a Florida Democrat who rocketed into orbit in 1986, said "turning off the lights and walking away from our sole outpost in space" makes no sense.

Retired NASA historian and Smithsonian curator Roger Launius notes that any such move will affect all involved in the space station; Russia is a major player, as are Europe, Japan and Canada. "I suspect this will be a major aspect of any decisions about ISS's future," Launius wrote in an email.

NASA has spent close to \$100 billion on the orbiting outpost since the 1990s. The first piece was launched in 1998, and the complex was essentially completed with the retirement of NASA's space shuttles in 2011.

**'Obamacare'**

The budget assumes that Congress will repeal and replace former President Barack Obama's health care law, although there's little evidence that Republican leaders have the appetite for another battle over "Obamacare."

Repeal of the Affordable Care Act should happen "as soon as possible," say the budget documents.

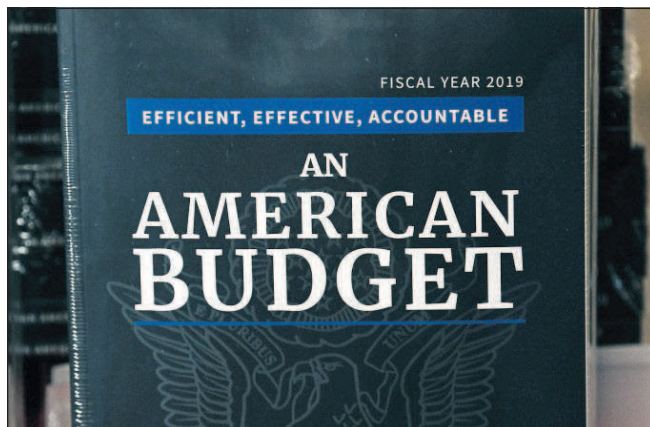
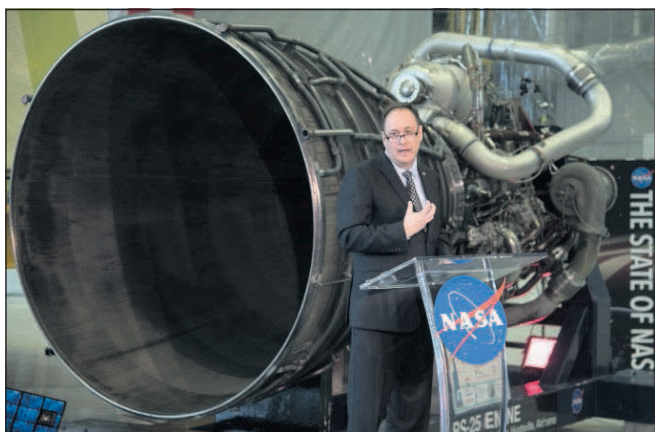
The Obama health law would be replaced with legislation modeled after an ill-fated GOP bill whose lead authors were Sens. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said it would leave millions more uninsured.

The budget calls for a program of block grants that states could use to set up their own programs for covering the uninsured.

**The arts**

Trump's budget calls for the elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities, two prominent grant programs founded in the 1960s that Trump proposed ending in last year's budget. Under his proposal, the NEA and NEH would "begin" shutting down in 2019 and neither organization should be considered "core Federal responsibilities." Each program receives just under \$150 million.

Although some conservatives have long complained about the NEA and NEH, the programs have bipartisan support and funding for them



Clockwise from upper left: Acting NASA Administrator Robert Lightfoot discusses the fiscal year 2019 budget proposal during a State of NASA address at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala. President Donald Trump speaks in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington. The President's FY19 Budget is on display after arriving on Capitol Hill in Washington. Director of the Office of Management and Budget Mick Mulvaney speaks during a television interview outside the White House in Washington.

was restored by Congress in 2017. Trump is also seeking to shut down other arts and scholarly programs that Congress has backed, including the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

**Environmental Protection Agency**

Climate change research is on the Environmental Protection Agency's chopping block.

Trump's proposed 2019 budget calls for slashing funding for the EPA by more than one-third, including ending the Climate Change Research and Partnership Programs.

The president's budget would also make deep cuts to funding for cleaning up the nation's most polluted sites, even as EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has said that is one of his top priorities. Trump's budget would allocate just \$762 million for the Hazardous Substance Superfund Account, a reduction of more than 30 percent.

Current spending for Superfund is already down to about half of what it was in the 1990s. Despite the cut, the White House's budget statement says the administration plans to "accelerate" site cleanups by bringing "more private funding to the table for redevelopment."

After the president's budget was developed, Congress reached a bipartisan agreement that would boost nondefense domestic spending for the next fiscal year. In response, Trump budget director Mick Mulvaney filed an addendum that seeks to restore about \$724 million to EPA, including additional money for Superfund cleanups and drinking water infrastructure grants.

**Housing**

The budget proposes deep cuts to funding for rental assistance programs, eliminates community block grants, and references future legislation that will implement work requirements for some tenants receiving public assistance.

Trump's proposal reduces the budget for rental assistance programs by more than 11 percent compared with 2017. It also eliminates funding for the Public Housing Capital Fund, dedicated to supporting public housing complexes, and Community Development Block Grants, which are doled out to cities, counties and communities for development projects.

The budget also requests legislation that would require able-bodied tenants who are receiving federal housing assistance to work.

In a two-year agreement passed last week and signed by the president, Congress included an additional \$2 billion earmarked for HUD. That addendum adds \$1 billion to "avoid rent increases on elderly and disabled families receiving rental increases." It also adds another \$700 million toward housing vouchers for low-income individuals and fami-

lies, and \$300 million to aide public housing authorities.

**Defense**

Trump's budget for 2019 shows the administration's concern about the threat from North Korea and its missile program.

The Pentagon is proposing to spend hundreds of millions more in 2019 on missile defense.

The budget calls for increasing the number of strategic missile interceptors from 44 to 64 and boosting other elements of missile defense.

The additional 20 interceptors would be based at Fort Greely, Alaska. Critics question the reliability of the interceptors, arguing that years of testing has yet to prove them to be sufficiently effective against a sophisticated threat.

The Pentagon also would invest more heavily in other missile defense systems, including the ship-based Aegis system and the Army's Patriot air and missile defense system, both of which are designed to defend against missiles of various ranges short of the intercontinental ballistic missile that is of greatest U.S. concern in the context of North Korea.

**Food stamps**

Trump's budget proposes massive cuts to the program that provides more than 42 million Americans with food stamps.

The budget also floats the idea of new legislation that would require able-bodied adults to work or participate in a work program in order to receive benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the official name of the food stamp program.

The president's budget would reduce SNAP by roughly \$213 billion over the next 10 years.

The budget calls for a \$17 billion reduction in 2019, and proposes "a bold new approach" to administering SNAP that will include a combination of traditional food stamps and packages of "100 percent American grown foods provided directly to households."

Stacy Dean, vice president for food assistance policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, said the proposed cuts to SNAP account for nearly 30 percent of the program.

She said the proposal, if enacted, "would be devastating for the one-in-eight Americans who use SNAP to put food on the table every day."

**Medicare**

Trump's budget proposes major changes to Medicare's popular prescription benefit, creating winners and losers among the 42 million seniors with drug coverage.

On the plus side for seniors, the budget requires the insurance plans that deliver the prescription benefit to share with beneficiaries a substantial portion of rebates they receive from drug makers.

The budget also eliminates the 5 percent share of costs that an estimated 1 million

school funding, but those initiatives didn't win the approval of Congress.

Among other key components is spending \$200 million on STEM education and \$43 million to implement school-based opioid abuse prevention strategies.

**Border wall**

The second stage of Trump's proposed border wall in Texas' Rio Grande Valley would be 65 miles long, costing an average of \$24.6 million a mile, according to the president's 2019 budget. That matches the amount requested in Trump's 2018 budget to build or replace 74 miles in San Diego and Rio Grande Valley, the busiest corridor for illegal crossings.

**Veterans**

The Veterans Choice health care program would get a big boost under Trump's 2019 budget.

The budget proposes an overall increase of \$8.7 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs, primarily to strengthen medical care for more than 9 million enrolled veterans. A key component is a proposed \$11.9 billion to revamp the Veterans Choice program, a Trump campaign priority. The planned expansion would give veterans wider freedom to receive government-paid care from private doctors and Minute-Clinics outside the VA system. It has yet to be approved by Congress, however, in part due to disagreement over rising costs and concerns over privatizing VA.

**State**

Trump's budget includes a modest increase of \$191 million for what's known as "overseas contingency operations," or active war zones like Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had argued in the past that the impending resolution of major global conflicts would decrease the need for U.S. spending and allow the Trump administration to significantly reduce what it spends overseas.

power in the hands of parents and families" in choosing schools for their children with a \$1.5 billion investment for the coming year. The budget would expand both private and public school choice.

A new Opportunity Grants program would provide money for states to give scholarships to low-income students to attend private schools, as well as expand charter schools across the nation. Charters are financed by taxpayer dollars but usually run independently of school district requirements.

The budget also calls for increased spending to expand the number of magnet schools that offer specialized instruction usually focused on specific curricula.

Last year, the Trump administration also called for boosting charter and private



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