

HSGAC Hearing:

*Consideration of the Nomination of the Honorable Russell
Vought to be Director, Office of Management and Budget*

January 15, 2025

Opening Statement, as delivered

Since taking office four years ago, President Biden has added \$8.4 trillion to our national debt. To be fair, the Trump administration added \$7.8 trillion to the national debt. This is truly a bipartisan problem.

To put the pace of our federal government's spending into perspective, for the last 8 years our government has added, on average, \$1 trillion to the national debt every 6 months. Now, for the first time in history, servicing our debt

has come at a cost us that is more than our entire defense budget. Interest now exceeds our military budget. This is not sustainable.

The Office of Management and Budget, or OMB, is the largest office within the executive office with the primary responsibility of producing a workable budget for the president. Unfortunately, over the past four years OMB failed to address our nation's fiscal situation and, in fact, took actions that accelerated the country's fiscal crisis.

Make no mistake, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in Congress

are also complicit in this reckless approach to spending by refusing to put any meaningful guardrails or parameters on taxpayer's money.

For example, each year I put forth a budget, a plan to balance the federal budget in five years. Last year I put forth a six-penny plan, started out as a one-penny plan, you could cut one percent over five years and balance your budget.

Last year, it was six percent because of the explosion of money that happened during Covid. Every single Democrat opposed this and seven Republicans but we got a big chunk of the Republican caucus on

that bill. But instead of taking advantage of an opportunity for fiscal responsibility in 2025, we've added another \$1 trillion to our deficit in the 4 months since I introduced my budget. Reports out today were over \$700 billion in debt in the last three months.

For years, I have been beating the drum on waste in our government. Each year I release a "Festivus Report" highlighting the new and egregious examples of waste I've found.

Just last month, I released the most recent iteration of this report which identified over \$1 trillion in

unnecessary and often absurd government spending such as:

- . \$400,000 to determine whether lonely rats seek cocaine more than happy rats.
- . \$3 million for 'Girl-Centric Climate Action' in Brazil.
- . \$10 billion in maintaining, leasing, and furnishing empty federal government buildings.
- . \$12 million on a pickleball complex in Las Vegas.
- . \$4.8 million for social media influencers in Ukraine.

- . \$20 million on teaching Pakistan, Vietnam, Colombia, and Brazil how to use fertilizer.
- . \$2 million to New York University to study kids looking at Facebook ads about food.

The list goes on and on. It is beyond time for our federal government to start taking responsibility for this reckless and irresponsible approach to spending.

While I was disappointed to see our nation's annual budget deficit grow during President Trump's first

term, I remain optimistic about President Trump's nominee, Mr. Russell Vought. Mr. Vought has been a consistent advocate for fiscal sanity and has continually suggested strategies to decrease excess spending.

The Director of OMB plays a pivotal role in our economy, especially now. Our government is over \$36 trillion in debt, and the Congressional Budget Office predicts an average of about \$2 trillion per year for the 10 years. No end in sight. We need someone with the strength of character, like Mr. Vought to put the foot down, to put

the hammer down, and say enough is enough.

Mr. Vought is well qualified for this role, having previously served as Director in both an official and acting capacity, and as well as having been the Deputy Director.

As Director, Mr. Vought will be tasked with spearheading the President's budget. He will also be tasked with overseeing agency use of funds, coordinating agency activities across the federal government, and working with Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy's Department of Government Efficiency.

However, unless the new administration has the courage to tackle entitlement reform, the national debt will continue to explode.

I support Mr. Vought's nomination and I remain hopeful that the incoming administration will take the necessary steps to restore fiscal sanity.