

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
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Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
“FY 2012 HHS Budget and the Implementation of Public Laws 111-148 and 111-152”
Subcommittee on Health
March 3, 2011

I would like to thank Chairman Pitts for holding this hearing.

Madam Secretary, it's a pleasure to welcome you back. I know that your father was a Member of this Committee so your history here runs deep.

First, I commend you on the work you're doing to implement the Affordable Care Act. The job you were given by Congress and the President is imposing, but you've met it with leadership and steadfast commitment.

It has been just a year since the Affordable Care Act was passed by Congress, and in that time we've seen remarkable improvements through new benefits and protections in health insurance policies and in our health programs.

Today's hearing is meant to address the President's budget proposal for HHS for fiscal year 2012.

I do have some concerns with some of the proposals contained in that budget, but recognize the difficult decisions that you and the President had to make to meet our deficit reduction goals.

But fiscal year 2012 seems very far away at this point. I'm much more focused on the threats from the Continuing Resolution passed by the House.

I believe the cuts proposed by the Republican budget would be just devastating to the mission of your department.

The Republican proposal would cut 23% from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This will devastate the ability of the agency to maintain its basic functions like paying

Medicare claims, cracking down on fraud, and funding health programs through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

The FDA would see cuts of 17% – with enforcement of the new food safety law gutted.

The Centers for Disease Control would be cut by 37% – leaving Americans more exposed to viruses and illness.

The Community Health Centers program, despite its bipartisan support, would be cut by \$1 billion, closing 127 health centers and cutting off 11 million patients from the care they need.

Cuts of this magnitude are not “belt-tightening” or doing “more with less.”

They go to the heart of the core missions of the agencies that comprise HHS – jeopardizing access to health care; research; and the safety of our food and pharmaceuticals.

I agree with President Obama's guidance to us yesterday in discussing a final CR for this fiscal year: This agreement should be bipartisan, it should be free of any party's social or political agenda, and it should be reached without delay.

Thank you, Madam Secretary, for being here today, and I urge you to continue to work diligently to implement the essential protections of the Affordable Care Act.