**DRAFT LCAO Tax Reform Statement**

**Please send comment to** **howard.bedlin@ncoa.orog** **by Monday Noon**

Older Americans will be among the big losers if the House tax reform bill under consideration passes. Republican leaders have made it clear that the fiscally irresponsible $1.5 trillion increase in the federal budget deficit will result in major cuts in to Medicare, Medicaid, discretionary programs like the Older Americans Act, and perhaps even Social Security.

The same budget resolution that permitted a Republican-only tax reform bill to pass while exploding the federal deficit, also included $473 billion in cuts to Medicare, approximately $1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid, and $800 billion in cuts to “non-defense discretionary” programs like the Older American Act. These plans were confirmed in recent *Roll Call* interviews with several House Budget Committee and other members, who all anticipated that enacting such cuts would be a priority next year.

The enormous reduction in revenues under the tax reform bill could also harm Americans age 50-64, since millions of baby boomers are qualifying for Medicare and Social Security each year, and our ability to keep our promises to working American who have paid into these programs for decades may be seriously jeopardized.

Additional concerns for America’s seniors under the bill are proposals to repeal the Medical Expense Deduction and state and local tax deductions. Approximately five million taxpayers over age 65 use the medical expense deduction to reduce potentially bankrupting out-of-pocket medical expenses, such as paying for expensive nursing home care. Repealing state and local tax deductions will likely result in cutting critical senior community services, such as transportation, meals and wellness programs.

Finally, we are deeply disappointed that votes will be taken in the House without a single hearing being held on the details of the bill introduced. Tax reform impacts every aspect of our economy. Americans deserve careful deliberation and understanding, not a rush to judgement to meet arbitrary deadlines. No votes should be taken without thorough analyses by the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation and Congressional Budget Office, including detailed distribution tables.

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations ([www.lcao.org](http://www.lcao.org)) is a coalition of 70 national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America’s older population and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena. For the past xx years, LCAO provides leadership and vision as America meets the challenges and opportunities presented by its aging society, advocates for strengthening the public and private sector responses to meeting the needs of America’s older population, and promotes thoughtful and rational policy changes where such changes are necessary.

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