Draft LCAO Chair **Senate** Tax Reform Statement

Statement of James Firman, chair of the 70-member Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) coalition:

Older Americans will be among the big losers if the Senate tax reform bill under consideration passes. Republican leaders have made it clear that their 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 may be used as an excuse to cut Social Security.

The same budget resolution that permits a Republican-only tax reform bill to pass while exploding the federal deficit includes $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 planned cuts 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 Americans who have paid into these earned benefits programs for decades may be seriously jeopardized.

Additional concerns for America’s seniors under the bill are the proposal to repeal all state and local tax deductions. One-third of taxpayers making $50-75,000 use this deduction, as do half of those making $75-100,000. Repealing state and local tax deductions will likely result in cutting critical state-funded senior community services, including Medicaid, transportation, and meals programs.

Finally, we are deeply disappointed that votes will be taken in the Senate 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 judgment to meet arbitrary deadlines.

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