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November 27, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Speaker Ryan:

It is no secret that I am vigorously opposed to the disastrous “tax reform” bills that you are pushing in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate.

At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, both of these bills would provide huge tax breaks to the very rich and large corporations. Meanwhile, they would raise taxes for millions of middle class families.

Further, and the point of this letter, is that both of these bills would increase the federal deficit by more than \$1.4 trillion, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation.

I am very concerned that if you succeed in passing tax legislation that significantly adds to our national debt, you will then move aggressively to balance the budget on the backs of working families, the elderly, the children, the sick, and the poor. In other words, in order to pay for tax breaks for the rich and large corporations, you will make massive cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, nutrition, environmental protection, and every other program designed to protect the needs of the middle class and working families of our country.

Before the Senate votes on tax legislation that adds over \$1.4 trillion to the deficit, you owe the American people a specific and detailed explanation as to how the Republican Congress will achieve its commitment of balancing the budget over the next decade.

Will you schedule a vote to raise the eligibility of Medicare from 65 to 67 as called for in the House Budget Resolution? Will you attempt to end Medicare as we know it by giving seniors vouchers to purchase private health insurance, something long supported by Speaker Ryan?

How much will you cut Social Security? Will you try to increase the retirement age to 70, cut cost-of-living adjustments for senior citizens and disabled veterans, and/or privatize Social Security?

Will you support legislation to cut Medicaid by \$1 trillion over the next decade, kicking 15 million Americans off of health insurance? As you know, this was a provision included in the Republican Budget Resolution that was passed earlier this year.

How much do you plan on cutting affordable housing, Pell Grants, WIC, and Head Start to pay for a permanent tax break for profitable corporations?

The bottom line is that the American people have a right to know exactly how you plan to pay for a \$1.4 trillion increase in the deficit before, not after, tax legislation is signed into law. In your response, please be as specific as you can.

Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Budget Committee