COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

February 12, 2015

The Honorable Tom Price
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
201 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As required by Section 301(d) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-344) and in response to your letter of January 16, 2015, this letter transmits the Views and Estimates of the Committee on Ways and Means on those aspects of the Federal budget for the Fiscal Year 2016 that fall within the Committee's jurisdiction.

The current pace of the economic recovery is insufficient and far too many Americans remain unemployed. As such, the Committee will continue to focus on promoting policies that spur private sector job creation and economic growth. These policies include reforming the tax code to make American employers and workers more competitive, expanding trade especially through providing new opportunities to grow exports of American made goods and services and by reducing the burden placed on American employers by the recent rapid growth in budget deficits, reducing the national debt, and eliminating inefficient and counter-productive government regulation.

I. Legislative Issues with Budgetary Impact

A. Human Resources – The Committee will work to help more unemployed Americans find jobs by reviewing the operation of current unemployment benefits and programs and developing improvements as needed. The Committee will also review the effectiveness of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Child Support Enforcement, and Child Care and Development Block Grant programs to ensure they target those most in need and promote economic mobility through employment. The Committee will continue its effort to improve the exchange of program data to improve administrative efficiency and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse. The Committee will also continue its general oversight over the Human Resources programs under its jurisdiction, including reviewing program interactions, eligibility standards, and duplication. The Committee will also review and act, as appropriate, on proposals in the President's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget.

B. Medicare and Other Health Care Issues – The Committee will closely oversee the implementation of the health care overhaul and its impact on federal spending, the

economy, those who already have insurance, employers, Medicare beneficiaries, and health care providers. In addition, the Committee will look for ways to reform the Medicare program to ensure its sustainability for current and future beneficiaries. The Committee will also examine policies that reduce the cost of health insurance, increase health care quality and improve outcomes, protect access to care, encourage transparency, and eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse.

C. Social Security –The Committee will work to strengthen Social Security programs though examining the financing challenges facing Social Security's retirement, survivors and disability programs, with particular focus on the role of Social Security benefits for today's and future beneficiaries, the cost of delay to taxpayers and beneficiaries in addressing those challenges, and proposed solutions. With the disability program also experiencing ongoing management challenges, the Committee will examine the process for both determining eligibility for benefits and the appeals process. In addition, the Committee will examine the agency's deployment of tight resources to serve the public and taxpayers and provide oversight of the management, performance, program stewardship and long-range strategic planning related to Social Security programs. The Committee will also continue to pursue options to better protect individuals, including children, from identity theft related to the proliferation of use and misuse of Social Security numbers.

D. Tax – The Committee recognizes that a complex, burdensome, anti-growth tax code remains a significant obstacle to economic recovery and job creation. Accordingly, the Committee anticipates continuing its extensive efforts to simplify and reform the tax code for individuals, families, and employers, in order to spur the robust job creation and economic growth necessary to reduce the Nation's persistently high unemployment rate. In so doing, the Committee will take a fresh look at tax policy proposals related to tax reform, while building on its record from the 112th and 113th Congresses, which featured not only more than 30 hearings devoted to tax reform, but also the work of 11 Tax Reform Working Groups and the formal release of a discussion draft of former Chairman Camp's Tax Reform Act of 2014. In addition, the Committee will continue to review other tax matters and will closely scrutinize the revenue recommendations contained in the President's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget.

E. Trade – The Committee seeks to increase economic opportunities for American workers and businesses through the expansion of trade adherence to trade agreements, rules by our trading partners and by the United States, and the elimination of foreign trade barriers to our goods and services, opening new markets and enforcing U.S. trade laws. The Committee intends to consider Trade Promotion Authority to strengthen the role of Congress in setting negotiating objectives for trade agreements, to improve consultation with Congress by the Administration, and to provide a clear framework for Congressional consideration and implementation of trade agreements. The Committee will continue its oversight over the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations, the Trade in Services Agreement negotiations, the Environmental Goods Agreement negotiations, expansion of the Information Technology Agreement, implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, negotiation of Bilateral Investment Treaty

negotiations, and the U.S. rule in the World Trade Organization, including U.S. goals, dispute settlement, and TWO accessions. The Committee expects to consider legislation to extend the Generalized System of Preferences and the African Growth and Opportunity Act and will continue its oversight over the operations of these programs and the Trade Adjustment Assistance programs. The Committee intends to consider legislation concerning the budgets and activities of agencies within its jurisdiction, particularly authorization of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, together with improvements to streamline and facilitate legitimate and compliant trade at the border, automate CBP processes, and improve enforcement. The Committee will continue its oversight over issues and opportunities in trade with emerging economies, including China and India, and the Administration's enforcement of trade agreement rules. The Committee intends to continue work to pass the Miscellaneous Tariff Bill, a package of noncontroversial bills to eliminate or reduce duties on products not made in the United States, in accordance with House rules.

II. The Fiscal Year 2016 Budget

The Committee will review the President's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget. This review will provide the Committee the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the President's budget in promoting job creation and economic growth, reducing budget deficits and debt, and ensuring the long term sustainability of programs within the Committee's jurisdiction.

III. Public Debt Limit

The current statutory public debt limit already is now greater than the gross domestic product of the United States. While the Committee recognizes its responsibility to ensure that the United States meets all its obligations, the current growth of the national debt is not sustainable. Current debt levels are already a threat to economic growth and unless action is taken, the projected increase in the national debt will threaten the economic foundation of the country. Thus the Committee intends to pursue policies to slow and ultimately reverse the growth in the national debt and prevent the need for future increases in the statutory debt limit

The Committee on Ways and Means looks forward to working with the Committee on the Budget as we promote prosperity, opportunity, security, and fiscal prudence.

Sincerely,

PAUL RYAN
Chairman