

A road map to restore fiscal health

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The looming fiscal and economic crisis - resulting from the explosion in entitlement spending - is no longer in doubt. What remains unclear is whether America's leaders will lead and set a different course for the next generation. If those leaders fail to act, the next generation of Americans will inherit a crushing burden of debt and an inferior standard of living. Reflecting upon my responsibilities as an elected official and as a father of three young children, I decided to take on this challenge and develop a plan to restore this nation's fiscal future.

I have invested over a year into this initiative, soliciting input from those I serve in Wisconsin, as well as budget and economic analysts who have crunched all of the numbers. From those discussions, I have developed a plan - called "A Roadmap for America's Future" - which takes on the root drivers of our unsustainable fiscal path, fixing health care, Medicare, Social Security and our tax system. This roadmap fulfills the mission of health and retirement security, lifts our massive debt burden, and strengthens American jobs and competitiveness for the 21st century. It is a real plan (www.americanroadmap.org) with real numbers to back it up and real legislation (HR 6110) to implement it.

These problems are too big to grow our way out of, tax our way out of or borrow our way out of. This fiscal crisis is not a Democratic problem or a Republican problem. It is an American problem, and it cannot be solved exclusively using the political ideology of either party. We need to build bipartisan support for actual solutions.

Not everyone will agree with every aspect of my proposal, and that's fine - but I hope this will spur others to offer their solutions. I welcome the long overdue debate on how we will leave the next generation with a better America.

Paul Ryan, a Republican from Janesville, represents Wisconsin's 1st congressional district.