R2R

We negate, resolved: the United States federal government should prioritize reducing the national debt over promoting economic growth.

We observe that the most important aspect of the national debt is not its size in itself, but how large it is compared to the size of the economy. As long as economic growth outpaces debt growth, the U.S. will be able to pay down the debt.

This will continue to happen for two reasons.

First, borrowing costs will go down.
Interest rates on Treasury bonds have been falling for decades and will keep falling, meaning we can simply borrow to make interest payments, and the ratio of debt to GDP will still decline. That's important because lower interest rates make it much easier for the U.S. to finance the debt. David Wessel at the Brookings Institution explains in 2019: if interest rates on federal debt were just 1 percentage point lower during the next 30 years, federal debt would be smaller by more than 30 percent of GDP at the end of that period.

Second, the economy will grow. Historically, economic growth paid down the debt, like how strong economic performance after World War II led the debt-to-gdp ratio to plunge.

The U.S. will soon experience a new period of massive growth. Seth Redmore at Lexalytics writes in 2017: artificial intelligence will drive unprecedented economic growth, nearly doubling global GDP in the next 20 years by increasing productivity; AI may be the single greatest economic growth factor in history.

This will make paying off the debt much easier. Thomas Franck writes in CNBC in 2017: if artificial intelligence expands its capabilities, then dealing with debt could become a lot easier. Tireless robots would make our economy more productive, which would boost economic growth — giving us more money for paying down debt.

Thus, there is no need to prioritize debt reduction in order to achieve manageable debt levels. Trying to do so would only create economic pain.

Thus, our sole contention is entitlement cuts.

If the federal government does prioritize debt reduction, it would have to cut entitlement spending, since it accounts for the lion's share of debt increases.

Michael Tanner writes in the National Review in 2018: While tax cuts will add about $1.85 trillion to the debt over a decade, increased spending will add around $12 trillion to the debt over ten years. Half of all federal spending is on medicare, medicaid, and social security. And the cost of all three programs is accelerating. A combination of an aging population and rising health-care costs means that Medicare is expected to grow by as much as 7 percent per year. Quite simply, there is no way to seriously reduce spending without reforming these programs.

Slashing these programs would create a downward economic spiral, where people lose money, spend less, and slow the economy. In just the example of social security, Brian Covert at ThinkProgress writes in 2013: the program keeps 26.6 million people out of poverty.

This would plunge the economy into slowdown. Randall Wray, a professor of economics at the University of Missouri-Kansas, writes in 2010 that with the exception of the Clinton surpluses, every significant reduction of the outstanding debt has been followed by a depression.

Not only do entitlement cuts create the conditions for an economic slump, but they also make it more difficult to climb out of one. Robert Rubin at the Washington Post writes in 2017: these programs serve as “automatic stabilizers” during an economic downturn. In a weak economy, as more people lose income and become eligible for federal benefits, the programs expand, putting more money in more people’s pockets. People then spend that money, increasing demand and helping the economy recover.

If the Federal government cut entitlement programs during, or right before, a recession, it would be shooting itself in the foot by weakening that safety net.
This was confirmed in the last recession, when the U.S. government strengthened these programs, but European governments made deep cuts to them to try to lower debt. The U.S. economy has recovered much faster because it supported these programs. Frances Coppola at Forbes explains in 2018 that, in Europe: The result has been a decade-long slump. Some countries in Europe still have unemployment in double digits. An entire generation has been thrown on the scrap heap in the name of “balancing the books.”

Thus, we negate

CASE CARDS

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We observe that the most important aspect of the national debt is not its number, but its ratio compared to the size of the economy. As long as economic outgrowth outpaces debt growth, the U.S. will be able to pay down the debt.

This will continue to happen for two reasons.

First, borrowing costs will go down. Harry Stein at the Center for American Progress writes in 2017: Interest rates on Treasury bonds have been falling for decades, indicating that investors are fully confident that the United States will be able to afford to pay them back in the future.

Stein 17 Harry Stein [Director of Fiscal Policy at the Center for American Progress and was formerly a legislative assistant to Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI).], 2017, "America Can Still Do Big Things: Dispelling the Fiscal Hysteria that Thwarts Good Public Policy," Harvard Law & Policy Review, http://harvardlpr.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/HLP107.pdf //DF

Starting in 2011, misguided concerns about budget deficits caused Congress to abandon efforts to help the economy recover from the Great Recession.4 Economists linked this fiscal austerity to higher unemployment and slower economic growth.5 Worst of all, after austerity made it harder for jobless Americans to find work, Congress refused to reauthorize extended unemployment benefits that expired at the end of 2013. This caused over one million Americans to lose their benefits at a time when the unemployment rate was well over six percent.6 According to Douglas Elmendorf, who directed the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office during this period, "A rush to reduce budget deficits after 2010 was the biggest error in this downturn."7 In Part I, this article will establish that the conventional wisdom about the national debt is wrong. While reckless fiscal policy changes have the potential to destabilize the economy, the American fiscal system is fundamentally strong. **Interest rates on Treasury bonds have been falling for decades, indicating that investors are fully confident that the United States will be able to afford to pay them back in the future**. Over the long-term, meaning the next several decades, the United States has ample time and capacity to make whatever adjustments end up being necessary to appropriately manage the national debt. Likewise, investors currently see the United States federal government as an extremely safe place to lend their money. In fact, financial analysts often consider interest rates on Treasury bonds to represent the rate of return provided by the market for a "risk-free" investment.9 For most of 2016, interest rates on five-year Treasury bonds were so low—well below two percent—that these interest rates were actually negative after accounting for expected inflation.10 Negative real interest rates on Treasury bonds mean that investors are effectively paying for the privilege of loaning their money to the United States. If investors were at all concerned that a looming fiscal crisis might threaten the ability of the United States to pay back the bondholders who finance the national debt, they would demand significantly higher interest rates to compensate them for accepting this risk. Looking ahead thirty years, however, CBO warns that current laws for taxes and spending would lead to "steadily increasing federal budget deficits and debt" that would create "substantial risks for the nation."11 This conclusion is primarily driven by three factors. First, CBO expects an aging population to drive up costs in federal programs for the elderly, primarily Social Security and Medicare.

That's important because lower interest rates make it much easier for the U.S. to finance the debt. David Wessel at the Brookings Institution explains in 2019: if interest rates on federal debt were just 1 percentage point lower during the next 30 years, federal debt would be smaller by more than 30 percent of GDP at the end of that period. If interest rates are low, we can simply borrow to make interest payments, and the ratio of debt to GDP will still decline.

Wessel 19 David Wessel, 1-4-2019, "The Hutchins Center Explains: How worried should you be about the federal debt?," Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2019/01/04/the-hutchins-center-explains-how-worried-should-you-be-about-the-federal-debt/ //DF

Yes. After all, if the bond market isn't worried about the prospects for ever-greater federal borrowing, why should the rest of us panic? There's no evidence that government borrowing is crowding out private investment and very little sign of an imminent increase in inflation that will overwhelm the Federal Reserve's ability to manage it. As long as interest rates remain low – a big "if," to be sure – the government can continue to borrow without doing much harm. CBO estimates that, **if interest rates on federal debt were just 1 percentage point lower** than the agency expects **during the next 30 years, federal debt would be smaller by more than 30 percent of GDP at the end of that period. If interest rates are low** – to be technical, if the key interest rate is below the economy's growth rate – then there's not much economic advantage to acting now or later to restrain the federal debt. With interest rates low, **we can simply borrow to make interest payments, and the ratio of debt to GDP will still decline**. A key question, of course, is how high can the debt go without interest rates rising above the GDP growth rate?

Second, the economy is about to experience massive growth. Historically, economic growth has made debt not a problem. Levitt at the CRS explains in 2010: World War II resulted in unprecedented levels of debt as a percentage of GDP as a result of rapidly increasing outlays, which outpaced GDP growth. After the war ended, debt as a percentage of GDP fell in nearly every year over the next three decades as a result of strong economic growth.

Levitt, CRS, 2010, "The Federal Debt: An Analysis of Movements from World War II to the Present", https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL34712.pdf (NK)

Factors influencing movements in debt levels include spending levels, revenue collections, and economic growth. These factors can lead to changes in debt as a percentage of GDP which cannot always be anticipated. For example, if increases in spending or decreases in tax revenue outweigh strong GDP growth, debt as a percentage of GDP can increase. At other times, increases in tax revenues and decline in spending, in combination with strong economic performance, can lead to declines in debt as a percentage of GDP. **World War II resulted in unprecedented levels of debt as a percentage of GDP as a result of rapidly increasing outlays, which outpaced GDP growth. After the war ended, debt as a percentage of GDP fell in nearly every year over the next three decades as a result of strong economic growth.** After that period of strong GDP growth, rapid increases in defense spending and tax cuts during the 1980s resulted in a decade-long trend of rising debt as a percentage of GDP. **The early 1990s**

were characterized by tax increases, a recession, and rising debt as a percentage of GDP. This was followed by several years of budget surpluses and a strong economy, which led to declines in debt as a percentage of GDP in the late 1990s. Currently, tax cuts, increases in spending, and a weak economy have resulted in rising debt levels as a percentage of GDP.High levels of debt can have a significant impact on the federal budget and the economy over the long term. Though debt levels today do not match historical highs, future levels of debt concern many. CBO projected that a permanent and immediate combination of spending cuts and revenue increases amounting to 6.9% of GDP will be necessary in order to maintain the present level of debt (as a percentage of GDP) 50 years from now. If immediate actions are not taken, the magnitude of changes required in the future would be greater. If large primary deficits (deficits in excess of the net interest payment) persist or if the interest rate on the debt exceeds economic growth indefinitely, it may become harder for the federal government to find investors willing to purchase new debt. This might lead to an inherently unstable situation with regard to the government's ability to incur future debt. This report will be updated as events warrant.

The next economic revolution is here. Seth Redmore at Lexalytics writes in 2017: artificial intelligence will drive unprecedented economic growth, nearly doubling global GDP in the next 20 years. Artificial intelligence helps people do more work, in less time, with fewer resources and less expertise. AI-powered technologies will help humans develop better tools to produce goods and services (capital), and let us focus our work activities (labor) on whatever produces the greatest value. And because it can learn as it goes, AI's ability will only increase as time goes on. In fact, AI may be the single greatest economic growth factor in history.

Redmore 17 Seth Redmore, 9-19-2017, "Artificial Intelligence Will Double Economic Growth: Here's How," Lexalytics, https://www.lexalytics.com/lexablog/artificial-intelligence-double-economic-growth //DF

Remember back in October 2016, when Donald Trump promised 4% growth for the United States economy? Experts were skeptical (still are, too). Around the same time, the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco predicted a "new normal" growth rate of 1.5% to 1.75%. Thing is, Trump may have been on to something – albeit inadvertently. Many economists today are predicting that **artificial intelligence will drive unprecedented economic growth**: upwards of 4.6% or more. But how will this occur? Here's the short answer: **Artificial intelligence helps people do more work, in less time, with fewer resources and less expertise**. Recent GDP Growth Has Slowed We'll start with some context. Worldwide, gross domestic product (GDP) has been pretty stagnant. Growth in many large economies has averaged a meager 1.1 percent since 2010. See this chart from a recent Accenture report, "Why Artificial Intelligence is the Future of Growth": Things are about to change. Enter artificial intelligence. Artificial Intelligence Changes the Economic Game Let's define some terms. Capital measures the value of human-made goods and the means of production. Labor represents the work done by people, and the skills those workers possess. Economic growth occurs when capital or labor increase, or when they're used more efficiently. Historically, innovations like the steam engine and typewriter have either increased capital or labor, or helped people use them more efficiently. Artificial intelligence changes the game by acting as a force multiplier for both capital and labor. Artificial/Augmented Intelligence will Double Economic Growth AI's ability to enhance both capital and labor is unique. According to the study by Accenture, artificial/augmented intelligence will **nearly double global GDP in the next 20 years**. These are numbers we haven't seen since the 1980s. **AI-powered technologies will help humans develop better tools to produce goods and services (capital), and let us focus our work activities (labor) on whatever produces the greatest value. And because it can learn as it goes, AI's ability will only increase as time goes on. In fact, AI may be the single greatest economic growth factor in history**. But how will this look in practice? Let's start with the impact of AI on white collar (office) work.

This will make paying off the debt much easier. Thomas Franck writes in CNBC in 2017: if artificial intelligence expands its capabilities, then dealing with debt could become a lot easier. Tireless robots would make our economy more productive, which would boost economic growth — giving us more money for paying down debt.

Franck 17 Thomas Franck, 4-4-2017, "Artificial intelligence could spark 'radical' economic boom, according to new research," CNBC, https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/21/machine-learning-could-lead-to-economic-hypergrowth-new-research-suggests.html //DF

How is it possible to have such low payments with historically high levels of debt? Think of refinancing your mortgage. When rates drop, your monthly payments can, too — even if your total loan remains the same. Something similar is happening with US treasury bonds. Rates are quite low, so we can borrow large amounts and pay a relative pittance in interest. An uncertain future By 2047, the national debt could grow as high as 150 percent of GDP, based on projections by the Congressional Budget Office. The main reason? Rising health care costs, and the growing number of aging Americans requiring ever-more-expensive care. But there's a lot of uncertainty in estimates like this, because there's a lot we don't know about life in the 2040s. For instance, **if artificial intelligence expands its capabilities, and smart robots take over many of our jobs, then dealing with debt could become a lot easier. Tireless robots would make our economy more productive, which would boost economic growth — giving us more money for paying down debt**. Likewise, if we could find a better way to restrain health care costs, that too would ease the long-term debt picture, making it cheaper for the government to provide care via Medicare.

Thus, the only time that the government would have to cut these programs is if it tried to reduce debt.

C1: Entitlement Cuts

If the federal government prioritizes debt reduction, entitlement programs will be cut.

The growth in America's national debt is driven by spending increases, and most of that spending is on entitlements. Michael Tanner writes in the National Review in 2018: Despite record tax revenue, the federal government will still run an $800 billion budget deficit this year. That's because it will spend roughly $4.1 trillion this year. He continues that while tax cuts will add about $1.85 trillion to the debt over a decade, increased spending will add around $12 trillion to the debt over ten years. Spending is expected to grow by 70 percent, meaning that even without the tax cuts, we would be drowning in red ink. The big driver of federal spending remains entitlements, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Half of all federal spending for just three programs. And the cost of all three programs is accelerating. A combination of an aging population and rising health-care costs means that Medicare is expected to grow by as much as 7 percent per year. Quite simply, there is no way to balance the budget or seriously reduce spending without reforming these programs.

Tanner 18 Michael Tanner, 4-18-2018, "Taxes Don't Cover America's Expenses," National Review, https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/04/federal-debt-problem-entitlement-reform-only-solution/ //DF

Of course, income taxes are only one component of federal taxes, and for most Americans, it's not even the biggest part of their taxes. All in, Americans will pay $3.3 trillion in federal taxes this year. On top of that, they will pay $1.8 trillion in local and state taxes, for a total burden (local, state, and federal) of $5.2 trillion, roughly 30 percent of GDP. Americans will pay more in taxes this year than they will for food, clothing, and shelter combined. **Despite record tax revenue, the federal government will still run an $800 billion budget deficit this year. That's because it will spend roughly $4.1 trillion this year**, while taking in the aforementioned $3.3 trillion. This is not rocket science: If you spend more than you take in, you have a problem. Progressives will blame low taxes generally, and the recent GOP tax reform in particular. But the Congressional Budget Office says that tax revenues as a percent of GDP will decline by just 0.7 percent this year. Spending, on the other hand, will increase by 3 percent of GDP, more than four times as much. Over the long term, the tax cuts will probably mean larger deficits. CBO estimates that forgone tax revenue **will add about $1.85 trillion to the debt over a decade.** Not good. On the other hand, **increased spending will add around $12 trillion to the debt over ten years. Spending is expected to grow by 70 percent, meaning that even without the tax cuts, we would be drowning in red ink**. Houston, we have a spending problem. Where does that spending go? Despite complaints from conservatives, domestic discretionary spending (everything from the FBI to the FDA, the Department of Commerce to the Department of Education) accounts for just 16 percent of federal spending. Traditional subjects of conservative ire, such as foreign aid, amount to less than 1 percent of spending. At the same time, despite criticism from liberals, and even after the increases that Congress just approved, defense spending will be just 15 percent of federal spending. Obviously, every dollar counts, and the $143 billion in increased domestic and defense spending that Congress just passed is not going to be helpful. Still, **the big driver of federal spending remains entitlements,** specifically **Social Security** (24 percent of federal spending), **Medicare** (17 percent), **and Medicaid** (9 percent). That's **half of all federal spending for just three programs. And the cost of all three programs is accelerating. A combination of an aging population and rising health-care costs means that Medicare is expected to grow by as much as 7 percent per year,** while Medicaid increases at a rate of 5.5 percent annually. Meanwhile, Social Security is expected to increase from 4.9 percent of GDP to 6 percent within a decade. The long-term unfunded liabilities of these programs approach $80 trillion or more. **Quite simply, there is no way to balance the budget or seriously reduce spending without reforming these programs**. Yet entitlements remain off-limits on a bipartisan basis. Congress's answer to all this was to rush to the floor last week with a Balanced Budget Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Predictably, the measure failed, but it did highlight the hypocrisy of a Congress that seems to embody St. Augustine's prayer, "Oh Lord, make me chaste — but not yet."

Stephanie **Kelton**, 10-5-20**17**, "How We Think About the Deficit Is Mostly Wrong," **New York Times**, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/opinion/deficit-tax-cuts-trump.html //AM

Of course, there are real limits to what can be done. No country can commit to large-scale infrastructure investment unless it has the available nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnlabor, machinery, concrete and steel. Trying to spend too much will cause an inflation problem. The trick is to adjust the budget to make efficient use of the people, factories and raw materials we have. But all of this goes unrecognized on Capitol Hill, where **the** very **words "debt" and "deficit" have been weaponized for political ends. They serve as body armor to politicians who would deny resources to struggling communities or demand cuts to popular programs.** Perhaps no one is more skilled in the dark art of deficit deception than Representative Paul Ryan, the House speaker. **He has described the budget outlook as a "fiscal train wreck," and he has demanded cuts to programs like Social Security and Medicare in the name of protecting future generations from a "crushing burden of debt." His language is poll-tested and inflammatory by design.** It's intended to create a sense of urgency to move the budget into balance, where, we are told, the math of federal spending will finally "add up." In a more rational world, lawmakers would abandon the crude C.B.O. scoring model and recognize that the risk of overspending is inflation, not bankruptcy. They would avoid fruitless battles over the debt ceiling, and they would acknowledge that the deficit itself could be deployed as a potent weapon in the fights against inequality, poverty and economic stagnation.

In addition, Republican lawmakers have used tax cuts as a tool to demand entitlement cuts. Julian Zelizer writes in the Atlantic in 2017: President Trump's corporate tax cuts will generate enormous deficits, setting Republicans up to claim that the time has come to cut Social Security, Medicare, and welfare to reduce the deficit created by those very tax cuts. By creating a fiscal straitjacket through lower taxes, conservatives leave Washington with less money and raise the specter of deficits damaging the economy as a rationale to take away the benefits that millions of Americans depend on.

Julian E. **Zelizer**, 12-19-20**17**, "Blowing Up the Deficit Is Part of the Plan," **The Atlantic**, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/12/blowing-up-the-deficit-is-part-of-the-plan/548720/ //AM

President Trump's corporate tax cuts will likely **generate enormous deficits**, even if the administration's rosiest economic forecasts come true, **setting Republicans up to claim that the time has come to cut Social Security, Medicare, and welfare to reduce the** expected $1 trillion **deficit, created by those very tax cuts,** over the next 10 years. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has already announced that the GOP plans to cut federal health care and anti-poverty programs because of a deficit that his party is about to balloon. "We're going to have to get back next year at entitlement reform," he said on a talk-radio show, "which is how you tackle the debt and the deficit." This is exactly how what President Ronald Reagan's budget director, David Stockman, called "starving the beast" works. **By creating a fiscal straitjacket**

through lower taxes, conservatives leave Washington with less money and raise the specter of deficits damaging the economy as a rationale to take away the benefits that millions of Americans depend on. If they are not fiscally conservative right now, they can be when it comes time to talk about spending on the poor and disadvantaged. While the right usually encounters a fierce backlash whenever they try to retrench specific federal benefits, as the GOP recently discovered with their failed attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, cutting budgets in the name of deficit reduction has traditionally offered a less toxic mechanism for achieving the same goal. Yet the unintended consequence of tax cuts of this scale and scope might be to create a political space for Democrats to push for higher taxes in the future.

Even Democrats, who traditionally oppose entitlement cuts as a way to reduce the debt, will be forced to comply. Ron Haskins at the Brookings Institute writes in 2012: Democrats must agree to less spending on entitlements, especially Medicare. The leading cause of growing federal spending is Medicare, so much so that stabilizing federal debt as a percentage of GDP is unthinkable without much greater control of Medicare spending.

Haskins 12 Ron Haskins, 6-20-2012, "The Deficit: GOP Must Give In on Taxes, Democrats on Spending," Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-deficit-gop-must-give-in-on-taxes-democrats-on-spending/ //DF

Finally, Democratic government requires compromise. In the past, federal policymakers have agreed on many major deals with large budget impacts, all of which were based on compromises between the two parties. The 1983 deal on Social Security, the 1986 tax reforms, and the 1990 and 1997 budget deals found Republicans and Democrats addressing major national problems by the age-old Democratic method of give and take. Most Americans elect their representatives to come to Washington to solve problems, not to achieve a record of ideological purity. If Republicans must agree to higher taxes, **Democrats must agree to less spending on entitlements, especially Medicare. The leading cause of growing federal spending is Medicare, so much so that stabilizing federal debt as a percentage of GDP is unthinkable without much greater control of Medicare spending**. Under budget scoring rules, it will probably be necessary for congress to put a cap on the growth of Medicare spending that would actually control the growth of spending, regardless of the potential success of any particular reform in the Medicare program itself such as premium support or an advisory board that proposes cost-saving changes. Such a cap will impose new costs on consumers, but consumer awareness of cost is one of the forces that will drive the Medicare market to control price increases.

Cutting entitlement programs has two harms.

First, it would reduce the quality of life for Americans and put more into poverty. Brian Covert at ThinkProgress writes in 2013: Without social safety net programs such as Social Security, food stamps, welfare, unemployment insurance, and others, millions more people would be in poverty. Social Security has the biggest impact, keeping 26.6 million people out of poverty.

Bryce Covert, 11-6-2013, "The Social Safety Net Kept Millions Out Of Poverty Last Year," ThinkProgress, https://thinkprogress.org/the-social-safety-net-kept-millions-out-of-poverty-last-year-704467cf5805/ //AM

Without social safety net programs such as Social Security, food stamps, welfare, unemployment insurance, and others, millions more people would be in poverty, according to latest supplemental poverty measure report from the Census Bureau. The Census calculates a supplemental poverty measure (SPM) by taking various benefits and expenses into account, as well as geographical variety. That adjusted poverty rate was 16 percent in 2012, higher than the official measure of 15 percent. The Census then breaks out the benefit of a variety of programs in reducing the rate. **Social Security has the biggest impact, keeping 26.6 million people out of poverty** and reducing the SPM poverty rate by 8.6 percentage points. Without it, the SPM poverty rate would be 24.5 percent. Refundable tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit keep 9.4 million people out of poverty and lower the rate by three percentage points. Children get an even greater benefit, as their SPM poverty rate of 18 percent would be 24.7 percent without the credits. Advertisement The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamps, keeps 5 million people out of poverty and reduces the rate by 1.6 percent. Housing subsidies lift 2.8 million people out of poverty, reducing the rate by 0.9 percent. Unemployment insurance keeps 2.4 million people from being poor and reduces the rate by 0.8 percent. The Women, Infants and Children program (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF, or welfare), and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) all keep hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty each.

Second, entitlement cuts would harm the U.S. economy in times of economic slowdowns.

According to the Huffington Post in 2019: most economists predict a recession will happen within the next two years, due to several economic indicators.

Bond 19 Casey Bond, 1-17-2019 “4 Signs Another Recession Is Coming — And What It Means For You,” Huffington Post, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/recession-signs-how-to-prepare-for-a-recession_n_5c3e31b9e4b01c93e00e3a3b //DF

But as far as predicting when, exactly, a recession will happen, you might as well consult your magic eight ball. Although there are a few data points we can look to when predicting an approaching recession, nailing down a specific time frame isn’t possible. Even so, plenty try. According to Li, **most economists don’t predict a recession will happen this year, but they do think one is likely to happen within the next two.** Here’s why. Signs A Recession Is Coming Whether or not a recession will occur soon depends on who you ask. Take the Conference Board’s Leading Economic Index, for instance. It examines 10 leading economic indicators to arrive at a growth or decline rate for the economy, and it helps predict recessions in the months leading up to the downturn. In November, the LEI grew by 0.2, which signals that our economy is still humming along though growth has slowed a bit. Then again, other common economic measures say otherwise. Here are a few reasons why we might actually experience a recession soon. Stock market performance is often considered a strong indicator of overall economic health. And historically, stock market peaks have preceded economic downturns by an average of seven to eight months (the actual range is a lot wider). On Oct. 3, the Dow Jones hit its highest closing record for the 15th time in 2018 at 26,828.39, following the record-setting day prior. Less than three months later, the stock market experienced the worst December since the height of the Great Depression. Even so, you should take these “signs” with a grain of salt. As the late Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Samuelson joked decades ago, “the stock market has predicted nine of the last five recessions.” Certain stock market behavior can signify a recession is coming, but by no means heralds one. A somewhat more reliable indicator is the yield curve on U.S. Treasury securities. “Historically, when the yield curve inverts — the interest rate on shorter-term treasury bonds is higher than the interest rate on longer-term Treasury bonds — a recession can sometimes follow," said Rockie Zeigler III, a certified financial planner and owner of RP Zeigler Investment Services. How closely are the two correlated? Let's just say the curve was inverted prior to the past seven recessions. In early December, the front-end of the yield curve inverted for the first time in more than a decade, meaning the yield on 5-year Treasury notes dropped below the 2- and 3-year notes. Another major number that could point to an imminent recession is unemployment. And counterintuitively, it's a low rate of unemployment that often signals a slowdown. Recently, unemployment dropped to 3.7 percent — a nearly 50-year low. Wages are also growing at the fastest rate since 2009. According to Forbes, strong job market statistics like these indicate that we're reaching the end of the latest economic cycle rather than the beginning. In fact, an unemployment rate below 4 percent — which is quite rare — has often immediately proceeded past recessions. Finally, as mentioned above, recessions are a normal part of the economic cycle. "While it's not a very technical indicator, a long run of economic expansion can tell us something, too," Zeigler said. "We haven't had a recession or bear market since 2008-2009. The economy has been expanding (albeit slowly) since then. So have the stock markets." For these reasons, Zeigler said, we might actually be overdue for slowing economic growth, if not a recession.

Entitlement programs act as safety nets during recessions that can also restart the economy. Robert Rubin at the Washington Post writes in 2017: these programs serve as "automatic stabilizers" during an economic downturn: In a weak economy, as more people lose income and become eligible for federal benefits, the programs expand, putting more money in more people's pockets. People then spend that money, increasing demand and helping the economy recover.

Rubin 17 Robert E. Rubin, 3-10-2017, "Why hurting the poor will hurt the economy," Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-anti-poverty-programs-congress-wants-to-cut-are-crucial-to-the-economy/2017/03/10/5359b7e0-0509-11e7-b1e9-a05d3c21f7cf_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.4a9395c4869a //DF

Roughly 20 percent of U.S. children live in poverty. In the wealthiest country in the world, that's not just a moral outrage — it's a serious detriment to our economic future. For low-income children, Medicaid and SNAP are investments that significantly improve outcomes later in life. For example, one study found that children who received SNAP were less likely to experience stunted growth, heart disease and obesity as adults — and had graduation rates that were 18 percentage points higher. We need to do more, not less, to help these children — by providing early family intervention, better schools and housing, safer neighborhoods and much else. What's more, **these programs serve as "automatic stabilizers" during an economic downturn: In a weak economy, as more people lose income and become eligible for federal benefits, the programs expand, putting more money in more people's pockets. People then spend that money, increasing demand and helping the economy recover**. All this adds up to a clear but underappreciated reality: Anti-poverty programs are an economic imperative. And yet their future is in jeopardy.

If the Federal government cut entitlement programs during, or right before, a recession, it would be shooting itself in the foot by weakening that safety net.

This was confirmed in the last recession, when the U.S. government strengthened these programs, but European governments made deep cuts to them to try to lower debt. The U.S. economy has recovered much faster because it supported these programs. Frances Coppola at Forbes explains in 2018 that, in Europe: The result has been a decade-long slump. Some countries in Europe still have unemployment in double digits. An entire generation has been thrown on the scrap heap in the name of "balancing the books."

Frances **Coppola**, 4-17-20**18**, "Everything You've Been Told About Government Debt Is Wrong," **Forbes**, https://www.forbes.com/sites/francescoppola/2018/04/17/everything-youve-been-told-about-government-debt-is-wrong/#34784069314f //AM

Even if default is avoided, the cost of servicing debt will be unaffordable for future generations, we are told. The moral imperative is to close deficits and cut debt, even at the expense of much needed investment, because otherwise young people will bear an unacceptable burden. Young people themselves might think investment that helps to restore economic growth would be worthwhile, especially if they face years of unemployment because the economy is in a slump. But who cares what they think. Their elders know what is good for them and will make sure they get it, even if it hurts. Because high public debt is believed to be so dangerous, politicians – especially in Europe - have given a higher priority to closing public deficits than restoring economies badly damaged by the worst financial crisis in living memory. **The result has been a decade-long slump. Some countries in Europe still have unemployment in double digits. An entire generation has been thrown on the scrap heap in the name of "balancing the books"**. Unsurprisingly, public unrest is rising across Europe, and populist parties on both the far left and the far right are coming to power. Austerity that aimed to reduce the danger of debt default has rendered politics dangerous instead. Now, a new working paper from the IMF casts serious doubt on the entire basis for the austerity mantra. Far from default being inevitable if debt rises too high, it may never happen at all. For advanced economies in good standing, the government's debt capacity appears to be infinite.

C2: 5G Networks

FRONTLINES

AI

R/T Job Loss

While AI may displace some jobs, it will create far more, 58 million net (Chowdhry - Forbes)

Amit Chowdhry, September 2018, "Artificial Intelligence To Create 58 Million New Jobs By 2022, Says Report," Forbes, https://www.forbes.com/sites/amitchowdhry/2018/09/18/artificial-intelligence-to-create-58-million-new-jobs-by-2022-says-report/#78c44bba4d4b (NK)

Machines and algorithms in the workplace are expected to create 133 million new roles, but cause 75 million jobs to be displaced by 2022 according to a new report from the World Economic Forum (WEF) called “The Future of Jobs 2018.” **This means that the growth of artificial intelligence could create 58 million net new jobs in the next few years**. With this net positive job growth, there is expected to be a **major shift in quality, location and permanency for the new roles. And companies are expected to expand the use of contractors doing specialized work and utilize remote staffing**. In 2025, machines are expected to perform more current work tasks than humans compared to 71% being performed by humans as of now. Due to this transformation, it will have a major impact on the global workforce. This report is intended to provide guidance on how to improve the quality of the work being done by humans and how people should become prepared for emerging roles. And it is based on a survey of chief human resources officers and strategy executives from more than 300 global companies across 12 industries and 20 emerging economies. Plus the report has determined that 54% of employees of large companies would need to up-skill in order to fully harness these growth opportunities. Over half of the companies surveyed said that they plan to train only employees in key roles and only one-third are planning to train at-risk workers. Nearly 50% of all companies are expecting their full-time workforce to shrink by 2022 due to automation, but 40% are expecting to extend their workforce and more than 25% are expecting automation to create new roles in the enterprise. "It is critical that business take an active role in supporting their existing workforces through reskilling and upskilling, that individuals take a proactive approach to their own lifelong learning, and that governments create an enabling environment to facilitate this workforce transformation. This is the key challenge of our time," said World Economic Forum founder and executive chairman Klaus Schwab. Some of the fastest growing job opportunities across all industries include data analysts, software developers and social media specialists. Plus **jobs that require “human skills” like sales and marketing, innovation and customer service are also expected to increase in demand.** Some of the jobs that are expected to go away include data entry, payroll and certain accounting functions. The WEF is working across multiple industries to design roadmaps to respond to these new opportunities. The respondents provided three strategies to cope with these challenges. This includes hiring wholly new permanent staff with skills around new technologies, completely automating certain work tasks and retraining existing employees. And a smaller number of companies are expecting to allocate the work to freelancers and temporary workers.

R/T Bubles

Bubbles in the tech sector are just market corrections that clear away trash

Mangalindan 17 Jp Mangalindan, 2-20-2017, "Why AI could be Silicon Valley's latest 'micro bubble'," Yahoo Finance, https://finance.yahoo.com/news/why-ai-could-be-silicon-valleys-latest-micro-bubble-122521942.html //DF

2016 was supposed to be the year the tech bubble finally burst. Much like the dot-com bubble of the early 2000s — an industry implosion marked by high-profile flops such as online grocery delivery startup Webvan and pet supplies retailer Pets.com — skeptics pointed to less VC funding in 2016, stratospheric valuations including Uber’s $69 billion, the sales of once-pricey companies such as One King’s Lane, and sky-high rental and real estate prices. And contrary to tech insiders who largely remain bullish on the industry, some even saw smaller signs of a bubble in the hours-long bumper-to-bumper traffic on the US-101, a highway that meanders its way down the peninsula to tech-laden cities such as Menlo Park, San Jose and Mountain View. But after more than six years in Silicon Valley collectively, I’m convinced **there isn’t one big bubble these days, but rather a series of smaller “bubbles” within tech that balloon and swell until they burst, taking with them the droves of copycat derivatives and poorly managed companies all trying to capitalize on the latest, frothiest trend**. Ask just about any venture capitalist at this moment, and they’ll tell you they’re seeing a glut of artificial intelligence and machine learning startups flow their way angling for cash, employing increasingly complex algorithms across a wide range of industries. While some of these new companies may fulfill actual needs, there may simply be more AI startups than the world needs. Of course, some AI startups are more promising than others. Andreessen Horowitz general partner Vijay Pande told Yahoo Finance he is particularly bullish on companies such as Freenome, which the firm invested in last June. The Palo Alto-based startup uses machine learning to help detect different types of cancers from a blood test rather than from a tissue sample — a process that detects cancer long before more traditional methods can. Another startup Pande invested in, the health tech startup Cardiogram, is promising because it makes sense of and analyzes large amounts of user data to provide actionable insights that could ultimately save lives. Some A.I. ventures are trying to shake up other long-standing industries, like the San Carlos, Calif.-based Farmers Business Networks, a social network for, well, farmers, that relies on machine learning to improve data results around seed performance and pricing. And there are many, many more. While it's too early to tell which of those startups will evolve into viable businesses and which won't, it's relatively easy to look back over the last decade now to see past "micro-bubbles" for what they actually were. Alex Mittal, CEO and co-founder of the FundersClub, an online VC firm which invests in promising tech startups, agrees Silicon Valley has found itself swept up in macro-trends over the years that come and go in predictable cycles. "Every time there's a focus on a technology that's new, it gets overhyped, and the hype reaches an extreme," Mittal told Yahoo Finance. "The pendulum always seems to swing too far, and there's some sort of correction. Sometimes, it literally was just hype. There's no substance, and then it goes away. But sometimes, there's something really there." The 2008 financial crisis, interestingly, marked the first micro-bubble, marked by the "sharing economy," a business model based on the idea that assets or services are shared between people through the internet or mobile. Airbnb, founded in 2008, singlehandedly legitimized the idea of couch-surfing as a hotel alternative, by easily letting people rent out a room, an apartment or a home; Uber in 2009 upended the crusty, old taxi industry by creating a network of private drivers reachable with just a few easy taps on the smartphone.

Tech bubble is largely fueled by VC's - so when it pops a few VC firms may go bankrupt, but that only means a few billionaires will lose money - it won't affect the general population meaning consumption will stay high. Also, the workers who lose jobs will easily be able to get new ones as there is so much demand for tech workers around the country (Ozimek - Forbes)

Adam Ozimek, August 2018, "The Good News And Bad News About The Tech Bubble," Forbes, https://www.forbes.com/sites/modeledbehavior/2018/08/18/the-good-news-and-bad-news-about-the-tech-bubble/#373df4d663a4 (NK)

A key mistake I think that has been made is many investors believed a version of the McAfee and Brynjolfsson story: we are on the back half of the technological chess board. But we aren't. Progress remains linear, and whatever is happening in Silicon Valley it's limited enough that it hasn't been able to lift either productivity growth or the startup rate out of their historically very low levels. Those who are investing with the expectation that there will be massive disruption and they will profit from it are going to run out of patience eventually. One piece of good news is that, **compared to the Pets.com tech bubble, much more of the investment appears to be venture capital driven rather than being fulled by the stock market. When this tech bubble pops, it will take the air out of San Francisco house prices, end a lot of money losing ventures, see a variety of VC firms go bankrupt, and take some zeroes from a bunch of billionaires and millionaires. But it shouldn't be that big of a shock the average stock owning household's balance shee**t. And that's good news. **It means less of a wealth effect driven cutback in consumption**. The other piece of good news is that **those tech workers can disperse across the country and get jobs at regular companies helping them embrace the genuine improvements in tech. They shouldn't spend a lot of time in unemployment**. While some will lose their shirts due to the money they have tied up in crumbling firms and giant mortgages to pay for million dollar 800 square foot homes, many will still have what will be a lot of money when they return to the low cost parts of the country they came from. Hopefully this migration of wealth and skill out of Silicon Valley back to hometowns will deliver more of a boost to the startup rate than the current tech bubble has. When will the bubble burst and which firms will fail? That's even harder to say. Except that obviously a lot of deluded people are going to lose their savings and jobs in cryptocurrencies. But I have a feeling that when it does happen, this is the broad story that will play out. And that's not great news, but it's not that bad.

Spending Ability

R/T Less Foreign Bonds

Oh 18 Sunny Oh, 10-17-2018, "Overseas investors scoop up most Treasurys since 2015," MarketWatch, https://www.marketwatch.com/story/overseas-investors-scoop-up-most-treasurys-since-2015-2018-10-17

Foreign buyers have stepped up their purchases of Treasurys, softening fears that the U.S.'s yawning budget deficits were hurting appetite for government paper.

Overseas investors bought on net $63.1 billion of Treasurys in August, marking the largest monthly purchases since mid-2015, according to the transactions data from the Treasury International Capital report. Much of the buying was from the United Kingdom, which snapped up $27.3 billion.

The uptick in purchases helped to lift bond prices, pushing yields to their summer lows. The 10-year Treasury note TMUBMUSD10Y, +0.12% scraped 2.81% , close to the bottom of the year's trading range between 3.10% and 2.75%. Since then, U.S. yields have shot up to multiyear highs. Bond prices move in the opposite direction of yields.

"Bottom line, the U.S. Treasury market in August got needed foreign help and long-term rates fell that month," wrote Peter Boockvar, chief investment officer at the Bleakley Advisory Group.

The report could give relief to market participants who grew fearful over the U.S. government's growing debt issuance after the tax cut widened the budget deficit. In contrast to previous years, the U.S. bond auctions have been taken up by U.S., not foreign buyers, traditionally seen as an anchor of the bond market.

R/T Losing Reserve Currency

Despite losing a little bit of the worlds share in the past few months, the dollar still is the vast majority of the worlds reserve - 62% compared to Euros 20% (Leong - Reuters)

Richard Leong, 7-1-2018, "U.S. dollar share of global currency reserves fall further," U.S., https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-forex-reserves/u-s-dollar-share-of-global-currency-reserves-fall-further-imf-idUSKBN1JR21G (NK)

The U.S. dollar's share of currency reserves reported to the International Monetary Fund fell in first quarter of 2018 to a fresh four-year low, while euro, yuan and sterling's shares of reserves increased, according to the latest data from the International Monetary Fund. **The share of dollar reserves shrank for five consecutive quarters as the greenback weakened in the first three months of 2018** on expectations faster growth outside the United States and bets that other major central banks would consider reducing stimulus. **Still the dollar has remained the biggest reserve currency by far**. However, **the dollar strengthened in the second quarter on fears about a global trade war and the European Central Bank signalling it would not raise interest rates until latter half of 2019**. Global reserves are assets of central banks held in different currencies, mainly used to support their liabilities. Central banks sometimes have used reserves to help support their respective currencies. **Reserves held in U.S. dollars climbed to $6.499 trillion, or 62.48 percent of allocated reserves, in the**

first quarter. This compared with $6.282 trillion, or 62.72 percent of allocated reserves, in the fourth quarter of 2017. The share of U.S. dollar reserves contracted to its smallest level since reaching 61.24 percent in the fourth quarter of 2013, IMF data released late on Friday showed.Ranked second behind the greenback, **the euro's share of global reserves reached 20.39 percent in the fourth quarter**, up from 20.15 percent in the fourth quarter. This was its largest share since the final quarter of 2014, but well below the single currency's peak share of reserves at 28 percent in 2009.

R/T China taking over

China is like miles and miles away from becoming the world's reserve.

Wolf Richter, Wolf Street Jul. 2, 2018, 4, 7-2-2018, "Here's why efforts to reduce the dollar's dominance won't work anytime soon," Business Insider, https://www.businessinsider.com/us-dollar-heres-why-it-will-remain-dominant-around-the-world-2018-7 (NK)

Over the decades, there have been major efforts to undermine the dollar's hegemony as a global reserve currency, which it has maintained since World War II. The creation of the euro was the most successful such effort. The plan was that the euro would eventually reach "parity" with the dollar on the hegemony scale. Before the euro, global exchange reserves included the individual currencies of today's Eurozone members, particularly the Deutsche mark. After the euro came about, it replaced all those. And its share edged up for a while until the euro debt crisis spooked central banks and derailed those dreams. A**nd now there are efforts underway to elevate the Chinese renminbi to a global reserve currency**. This became official on October 1, 2016, when the IMF added it to its currency basket, the Special Drawing Rights. **But watching grass grow is breathtakingly exciting compared to watching the RMB gain status as a reserve currency. The RMB is the thin red sliver in the pie chart below with a share of just 1.39% of allocated foreign exchange reserves**. Minuscule as it is, it is the highest share ever, up from 1.2% in Q4 2017. In other words, its inclusion in the SDR basket hasn't exactly performed miracles as central banks seem to remain leery of it and have not yet displayed any kind of eagerness to hold RMB-denominated assets.

Entitlement Cuts

R/T Trump won't make cuts

Trump's claims to protect entitlements are disingenuous, as his attempt to repeal Obamacare demonstrates

Rappeport 17 Alan Rappeport, 11-15-2017, "Republicans May Use Cuts in Entitlement Programs to Reduce Deficit," NYT, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/15/us/politics/republicans-entitlement-programs-deficit.html //DF

Fiscal conservatives in the House and the Senate have long wanted to rein in spending on such programs but have had to temper those desires this year now that President Trump, who promised as a candidate not to touch entitlement programs, is in office. **But Mr. Trump showed some flexibility on the matter this year when he supported a plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act that would have cut Medicaid funding.** And in recent weeks, Republican leaders have quietly started to indicate that if they succeed in passing tax cuts, they will, in fact, look to overhaul government welfare programs. Representative Kevin Brady, Republican of Texas and the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, said this month that tax overhaul "alone won't get us back to a balanced budget." He said that House Republicans would soon turn toward "welfare reform and tackling the entitlements."

EXTRAS

Economy solves for debt

Gdp Growth → Debt Reduction WW2 and Clinton (Levitt - CRS)

Levitt, CRS, 2010, "The Federal Debt: An Analysis of Movements from World War II to the Present", https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL34712.pdf (NK)

Factors influencing movements in debt levels include spending levels, revenue collections, and economic growth. These factors can lead to changes in debt as a percentage of GDP which cannot always be anticipated. For example, if increases in spending or decreases in tax revenue outweigh strong GDP growth, debt as a percentage of GDP can increase. At other times, increases in tax revenues and decline in spending, in combination with strong economic performance, can lead to declines in debt as a percentage of GDP. **World War II resulted in unprecedented levels of debt as a percentage of GDP as a result of rapidly increasing outlays, which outpaced GDP growth. After the war ended, debt as a percentage of GDP fell in nearly every year over the next three decades as a result of strong economic growth.** After that period of strong GDP growth, rapid increases in defense spending and tax cuts during the 1980s resulted in a decade-long trend of rising debt as a percentage of GDP. **The early 1990s were characterized by tax increases, a recession, and rising debt as a percentage of GDP. This was followed by several years of budget surpluses and a strong economy, which led to declines in debt as a percentage of GDP in the late 1990s**. Currently, tax cuts, increases in spending, and a weak economy have resulted in rising debt levels as a percentage of GDP.High levels of debt can have a significant impact on the federal budget and the economy over the long term. Though debt levels today do not match historical highs, future levels of debt concern many. CBO projected that a permanent and immediate combination of spending cuts and revenue increases amounting to 6.9% of GDP will be necessary in order to maintain the present level of debt (as a percentage of GDP) 50 years from now. If immediate actions are not taken, the magnitude of changes required in the future would be greater. If large primary deficits (deficits in excess of the net interest payment) persist or if the interest rate on the debt exceeds economic growth indefinitely, it may become harder for the federal government to find investors willing to purchase new debt. This might lead to an inherently unstable situation with regard to the government's ability to incur future debt. This report will be updated as events warrant.

Entitlement Cuts

UQ – Republicans force entitlement cuts

Teresa **Ghilarducci**, 10-16-20**18**, "Senate Republicans Set Sights On Cutting Social Security," **Forbes**, https://www.forbes.com/sites/teresaghilarducci/2018/10/16/senate-republicans-set-sights-on-cutting-social-security/#72239adc5da1 //AM

These are stunning numbers. Our country made a commitment during the Depression to make sure that everyone and their families would be protected as they aged and if they became disabled. But national commitments don't renew themselves. Voting does. **The tax cuts in 2017** were a result of the Republican control of the federal government -- almost all Republicans voted for the tax cuts and almost all Democrats did not. The cuts **added $1 trillion to the federal deficit** and the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation did not support Republican arguments that the $1.5 trillion tax cut would pay for itself with economic growth. **Senator McConnell's announcement** today **makes clear political elites will use Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid as bargaining chips in budget negotiations and call for cuts in government**

spending. The higher deficits caused by the tax cuts of 2017 will fuel the chronic attack to cut the programs. White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow commented that "We have to be tougher on spending." **Mitch McConnell** just **said rising federal deficits and debt is not the Republican's fault but the deficit is caused by unwillingness to contain spending on Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.**

Erica **Werner**, 6-19-20**18,** "House GOP plan would cut Medicare, Medicaid to balance budget," **The Washington Post**, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/business/wp/2018/06/19/house-gop-plan-would-cut-medicare-social-security-to-balance-budget/ //AM

President Trump's corporate tax cuts will likely generate enormous deficits, even if the administration's rosiest economic forecasts come true, setting **Republicans** up to **claim that the time has come to cut Social Security, Medicare, and welfare to reduce the expected $1 trillion deficit**, created by those very tax cuts, over the next 10 years. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has already announced that **the GOP plans to cut federal health care and anti-poverty programs because of a deficit that his party is about to balloon.** "We're going to have to get back next year at **entitlement reform,**" he said on a talk-radio show, "which **is how you tackle the debt and the deficit.**" This is exactly how what President Ronald Reagan's budget director, David Stockman, called "starving the beast" works. By creating a fiscal straitjacket through lower taxes, conservatives leave Washington with less money and raise the specter of deficits damaging the economy as a rationale to take away the benefits that millions of Americans depend on. If they are not fiscally conservative right now, they can be when it comes time to talk about spending on the poor and disadvantaged. While the right usually encounters a fierce backlash whenever they try to retrench specific federal benefits, as the GOP recently discovered with their failed attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, **cutting budgets in the name of deficit reduction has traditionally offered a less toxic mechanism for achieving the same goal.**

Republicans are literally matching the money they've cut from taxes with entitlement cuts, dollar-for-dollar

Przybyla 17 Heidi Przybyla 10-4-2017, "Democrats find new ways to talk about entitlement cuts in campaign's closing days," NBC News, https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/democrats-find-new-ways-talk-about-entitlement-cuts-campaign-s-n923106 //DF

Democrats are seizing on a report detailing a nearly dollar-for-dollar balance between two decades of tax cuts benefiting the wealthiest 1 percent and proposed GOP spending cuts to the nation's social safety net programs. It could provide new fuel to Democratic candidates just two weeks before the midterm elections and comes on the heels of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's comments last week about the need to overhaul entitlement programs in order to reduce the federal deficit. Democrats on the congressional Joint Economic Committee issued the study, based on calculations by the nonprofit Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, late last week. It shows that the estimated $2 trillion cost of the Bush and Trump-era tax cuts through 2025 is the same amount Republicans have proposed cutting from Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and Obamacare. "It is a dollar-for-dollar transfer of benefits to those who need help the least paid for by those who need help the most," said Phil Schiliro, a Democrat who’s served in several government positions including as President Barack Obama’s legislative director.

We negate, resolved: the United States federal government should prioritize reducing the national debt over promoting economic growth.

Our sole contention is entitlement cuts.

If the federal government prioritizes debt reduction, entitlement programs will be cut.

The growth in America’s national debt is driven by spending increases, and most of that spending is on entitlements. Michael Tanner writes in the National Review in 2018: While tax cuts will add about $1.85 trillion to the debt over a decade, increased spending will add around $12 trillion to the debt over ten years. Half of all federal spending is on medicare, medicaide, and social security. And the cost of all three programs is accelerating. A combination of an aging population and rising health-care costs means that Medicare is expected to grow by as much as 7 percent per year. Quite simply, there is no way to balance the budget or seriously reduce spending without reforming these programs.

In addition, Republican lawmakers have used tax cuts as a tool to demand entitlement cuts. Julian Zelizer writes in the Atlantic in 2017: President Trump’s corporate tax cuts will generate enormous deficits, setting Republicans up to claim that the time has come to cut Social Security, Medicare, and welfare to reduce the deficit created by those very tax cuts.

Cutting entitlement programs has two harms.

First, it would reduce the quality of life for Americans and put more into poverty. Brian Covert at ThinkProgress writes in 2013: Without social safety net programs such as Social Security, food stamps, welfare, unemployment insurance, and others, millions more people would be in poverty. Social Security has the biggest impact, keeping 26.6 million people out of poverty.

Second, entitlement cuts would harm the U.S. economy in times of economic slowdowns.

According to the Huffington Post in 2019: most economists predict a recession will happen within the next two years, due to several economic indicators.

Entitlement programs act as safety nets during recessions that can also restart the economy. Robert Rubin at the Washington Post writes in 2017: these programs serve as "automatic stabilizers" during an economic downturn: In a weak economy, as more people lose income and become eligible for federal benefits, the programs expand, putting more money in more people's pockets. People then spend that money, increasing demand and helping the economy recover.

If the Federal government cut entitlement programs during, or right before, a recession, it would be shooting itself in the foot by weakening that safety net.

This was confirmed in the last recession, when the U.S. government strengthened these programs, but European governments made deep cuts to them to try to lower debt. The U.S. economy has recovered much faster because it supported these programs. Frances Coppola at Forbes explains in 2018 that, in Europe: The result has been a decade-long slump. Some countries in Europe still have unemployment in double digits.