



UNITED STATES SENATE
BUDGET COMMITTEE
RANKING MEMBER CHUCK GRASSLEY

Opening Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee
Hearing titled, “Next to Fall: The Climate-Driven Insurance Crisis is Here – And Getting Worse”
Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Our time at the helm of the Budget Committee is coming to an end.

Disappointingly, it’s ending the same way it began – not focusing on our nation’s unsustainable debt and deficits.

Instead of prioritizing the committee’s core responsibilities, here we are holding the 21st hearing on climate change.

I agree climate change is a serious issue meriting discussion – maybe in other committees, as opposed to this committee – but it’s difficult for me to take seriously a report that the majority chooses not to share with all members of the committee before the committee meeting.

So, today’s hearing is not a discussion on the merits.

I remain convinced that the Budget Committee should be focused on the immediate fiscal problems facing our country.

The American people evidently feel the same way.

The Majority invited leftwing film producers, consultants, luxury fishing guides, snow skiers and other non-scientists to give us the top opinion in the course of their 21 climate hearings.

Their testimony used studies rooted in extreme climate change modeling that failed to convince anyone of an impending climate doomsday.

Fortunately, over these 21 hearings that we’ve had the last two years, minority witnesses – those that I choose to put at the table – gave us actual scientific and economic expertise, testifying to debunk many of the underlying assertions of climate-driven fiscal collapse.

Moreover, the Majority continues to ignore the non-partisan CBO analysis finding the negative economic effects of climate change are dwarfed by those posed by our ballooning national debt.

I understand why the Majority won’t talk about our nation’s fiscal trajectory.

After all, that would require acknowledging the past four years of reckless spending resulting in 40-year high inflation. And that inflation continues to wreak havoc in the lives of middle-class Americans.

That negligent malpractice on the part of the Majority cost them the presidency and both Houses of Congress.

Instead of addressing the concerns of Americans head on, President Biden and his party attempted a strategy of deception and distraction.

First, Democrats told the American people that inflation was “transitory” – that was in 2021 –and that, being “transitory,” it was nothing to worry about.

Once it became obvious this wasn’t true, they took their far-left spending agenda, which sparked inflation in the first place, and repackaged it as if it were some sort of a cure.

Out of this we got the ill-named Inflation Reduction Act, which even President Biden later admitted was less about fighting inflation than it was enacting their coveted “green new deal.”

And, of course, CBO confirmed that bill actually increased inflation instead of reducing it.

The Inflation Enhancement Act, as I prefer to call it, along with President Biden’s expansive executive orders, flooded the economy with trillions in additional deficit spending.

Hardly a recipe for taming inflation and tamping down the rising cost of living.

“Bidenomics,” as the President later rebranded it, was a colossal failure.

Given this, there was little else to be done other than to change the topic to anything else. Whether that be abortion, trumped up legal charges against a political rival or the “existential” threat of climate change.

Despite this very loud message Americans sent in November, today’s hearing is more of the same.

Rather than admit inflation fueled by reckless spending caused insurance premiums to spike, climate change is used as the main scapegoat.

Never mind that historic inflation caused the cost of building materials to rise nearly 40 percent since 2020.

Given the impact of inflation on insurance costs, our time would be better spent exploring options to rein in \$2 trillion annual deficits and a national debt that recently topped \$36 trillion.

I had a good meeting with the Finance Minister of Sweden last week.

Sweden’s fiscally sustainable policies have near unanimous support across party-lines and enjoy broad-based public support. Their fiscal framework establishes an annual deficit or surplus target, incorporates a debt anchor at 35 percent of GDP and sets reasonable expenditure limits.

I would've liked to see this committee spend more time this Congress exploring innovative approaches like this to address our fiscal mess. We barely spent any.

This committee needs to move on to 2025 priorities – getting our fiscal house in order.

Mr. Chairman, I wish you and your family a merry Christmas and a happy holiday. Same to our witnesses and all here today

And we'll join in a new year working together on the Judiciary Committee.

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