

Prepared Statement by U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa)
Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee
Hearing on Climate-Related Economic Risks and Their Costs to the Federal Budget and the Global Economy
Wednesday, February 15, 2023
[VIDEO](#)

Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to be here with you for our inaugural hearing as Chair and Ranking Member of the Budget Committee. Despite our political differences, I know we can find common areas of agreement to work on together.

One area of agreement must be that our budget and appropriations process is broken. This sentiment isn't new, nor is it particularly partisan. No person could look at last year's process and say things are working.

For the fiscal year 2023 cycle, Congress didn't adopt a budget resolution. The Senate Appropriations Committee didn't markup a single bill. And, not one of the 12 individual appropriations bills was debated on the Senate floor. Instead, we were presented with a \$1.7 trillion omnibus just days before Christmas.

Things need to change.

I applaud Senators Murray and Collins for publicly announcing their commitment to regular order— including debating appropriations bills on the Senate floor. We need to do our part to make that happen.

We should also agree that our nation's fiscal outlook is dire.

The Congressional Budget Office will release updated budget projections this afternoon. Every indication is that their new projections will be as bad as — or worse than - last summer's projections.

What did they tell us last summer?

Within 10 years, public debt as a share of our economy will exceed World War II record highs. However, unlike after World War II — when spending and debt subsided — our public debt is projected to climb ever higher.

Our public debt will reach 110 percent of our economy in 2032 and grow to 185 percent by 2052.

Trillion dollar annual deficits will be replaced by \$2 trillion deficits within a few years.

Simply servicing the debt will lead to record-breaking annual costs of more than \$1 trillion within ten years.

Mr. Chairman, your immediate predecessor refused to bring in CBO to discuss the overall budget outlook. This was a mistake. I urge you to hold a hearing with CBO on the latest outlook. Nobody benefits from us burying our heads in the sand.

I acknowledge that a changing climate is a historical and scientific fact. I also recognize that most scientists agree manmade emissions contribute to climate change. Throughout my career, I have advocated for renewable and alternative energy solutions.

This being said, even if the entire U.S. stopped emitting greenhouse gases tomorrow, projected temperatures would only be 0.3 degrees Fahrenheit lower come 2100.

Even in this unrealistic scenario, the U.S. would still need major polluters, like China and India, to pull their weight.

As we look to address climate and energy issues, the nation must also address its fiscal health.

There's plenty of blame to go around for how we got into our current situation. For decades, Congress turned a blind eye as our nation walked toward a fiscal cliff. But, Democrats turned that walk into a sprint.

In March of 2021, Democrats took advantage of an emergency situation to pass a \$2 trillion partisan spending bill—even as our economy showed strong signs of recovery.

Then, as inflation soared to 40-year highs, they doubled down; spending trillions more on their liberal wish list. They pushed through omnibus appropriations bills with “take it or leave it” mantras for two years—each time growing the size of government. When not using fast-tracked procedures or a government shutdown as leverage, the Administration drove up deficits through unilateral actions like student loan giveaways that could cost taxpayers \$1 trillion.

Congress needs a fiscal reality check. This reality check should start with this Committee getting back to performing its core functions. This includes holding hearings on federal fiscal matters; examining programs and authorizations that have been on autopilot for decades; and performing robust oversight of agency spending—no government entity should be exempt.

Finally, I welcome the opportunity to work with you on budget process reform. Mr. Chairman, you are a well-established leader on the issue. I appreciate your stated interest in working with me on this issue starting from where you left off with Senator Enzi in 2019. It was a bipartisan process then and I think we can build to get it over the finish line this Congress.

Needless to say, we have our work cut out for us to get our fiscal house in order. To paraphrase former Fed Chairman Paul Volcker, cutting spending may be painful, but the pain for all of us will be much greater if it isn't accomplished.

I look forward to the witnesses' testimonies and a discussion of the challenges and risks facing our nation.

