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Concord Coalition and Fix the Debt Team Up To Highlight Fiscal Issues in 2016

The Concord Coalition and the Campaign to Fix the Debt announced today a joint effort to encourage public discussion during the 2016 presidential campaign of the nation's unsustainable budget policies.

The two nonpartisan organizations have a shared history of pushing for fiscal responsibility. In their new initiative, called "First Budget," the organizations will build a grassroots effort in Iowa and New Hampshire to encourage candidates to address the growing federal debt and alarming budget projections.

Our supporters - volunteers, business leaders, students and others - will deliver to the candidates an emphatic message: The first budget that the next president submits to Congress must chart a more sustainable course that strengthens the nation, encourages growth and protects coming generations from excessive government debt.

Our interaction with candidates will help voters judge which candidates are willing to make the tough choices that will be required.

We will ask candidates to acknowledge the challenging fiscal outlook and to come up with budget plans that are realistic and have the potential to attract bipartisan support. We expect to generate extensive conversation between the public and the candidates about the budget challenges ahead.

As part of First Budget, we will:

- Strengthen statewide networks of volunteers and activists by recruiting at civic, community and educational gatherings.
- Hold public forums and interactive budget exercises to highlight fiscal challenges.
- Engage the public through social media and provide timely updates on candidates' policy proposals.
- Meet with candidates and their staffs.
- Encourage voters to question candidates about their plans to deal with the national debt.
- Meet with editorial boards, reporters and columnists.
- Advertise to raise public awareness.

Our national debt is already higher as a share of the economy than it has been at any time since the World War II era. The Congressional Budget Office projects that annual deficits are about to go back up after a short-term improvement in the past few years.

“A sustainable budget is not just an economic imperative; it is a matter of generational responsibility,” said Robert L. Bixby, Concord’s executive director. “The next opportunity for major legislation to put the debt on a more sustainable path will likely come with the first budget of the next president. It is therefore critical for the 2016 presidential candidates to present a vision for the nation's future that is not dependent on mounting debt. We will work across party lines with concerned voters in Iowa and New Hampshire to look out for the best interests of future generations by demanding responsible budget proposals from the candidates.”

Maya MacGuineas, head of Fix the Debt, said: “Concord and Fix the Debt have long worked separately to build a sustainable budget policy. We are excited to come together on this important project – presidential leadership will be critical in making progress on getting the debt under control, and we need a leader who can engage in adult conversation on these challenging policy issues. Voters must make sure that candidates’ budget plans add up. In 2016, we need candidates with bold visions, and we think First Budget will convince the candidates that voters are ready for that approach.”

For more information, go to www.firstbudget.org.

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The Concord Coalition is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to fiscal responsibility. Since 1992, Concord has worked to educate the public about the causes and consequences of the federal deficit and debt, and to develop realistic solutions for sustainable budgets. For more fiscal news and analysis, visit concordcoalition.org and follow us on Twitter:

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