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Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank all of the invited guests here, witnesses, for taking the time out. I first want to start actually asking for a little help from this committee and the public at large. We have someone who's gone missing.

Perhaps you could help me find him. His name is Russell Vote. He is the OMB director. And for 15 months, Mr. Vote has been MIA.

He is supposed to testify before this committee as every previous OMB director has done, including Mr. Vote himself the first time he was OMB director.

Here we are 15 months into this Congress. Fifteen months this committee has been waiting for the OMB director to testify. Where is he?

So, if anyone spots this gentleman, if you could call the House Budget Committee and let us know, because we would like to know why exactly he is so afraid to testify before this committee.

Other Trump cabinet secretaries have testified before this committee and withstood public scrutiny. Why is Russell Vote so afraid to come before us in public and answer questions about his record and the record of this administration?

Perhaps he doesn't want to talk about the fact that, according to fresh new polling this past week, this is the single most unpopular president when it comes to the handling of the economy since George W. Bush during the Great Recession.

When asked in a poll by Reuters about President Trump's handling of the economy—do you approve or disapprove?—only 29% of Americans approve. That is far lower than each of the last three presidencies. Again, you have to go back 20 years to the Great Recession to find numbers that low.

A different poll—Yahoo/YouGov—shows Trump's handling on cost of living approval at 26%. Other polls from Fox News and CBS News are finding similarly low results.

So maybe Russ Vote doesn't want to be asked about that. Maybe Russ Vote is afraid to testify before this committee because he doesn't want to be asked about the Republican tax bill that they passed and the president signed into law last July, which included, of course, the largest health care cuts in American history, with CBO projecting that 15 million Americans will lose their health care as a result of that bill.

Maybe he doesn't want to come before us because, relevant to our hearing today, he doesn't want to be asked about the \$4.7 trillion increase in the national debt that is a result of the Republican

tax bill. No other piece of legislation in American history increased deficit and debt more than the Republican tax bill they passed this past summer.

Or perhaps he doesn't want to answer questions about the illegal impoundments that he executed last spring, which included withholding \$11 billion in disaster relief funding to states.

Or finally—and this list could go on and on—maybe he doesn't want to address in public what the full cost of this Iran war will be. I understand there's a secret meeting this afternoon that budget committee Republicans are holding with officials from DoD.

I think the American people deserve to know, and we deserve to ask to get this information, what the full cost of this war of choice will be. We have heard publicly the figure \$200 billion. That is a massive sum. That is enough money that you could have extended the Obamacare tax credits in full for seven years.

So again, the list goes on and on, and actually, come to think of it, I might have answered my own question. I actually can understand why Mr. Vote has gone missing, because those would be very difficult questions to answer.

Finally, in the time I have left, let me say this—and I've said this publicly in previous hearings before, and I've said it in private to a number of my Republican friends on the other side of the aisle like Mr. Harrington, Mr. Smucker, and others.

At some point, I agree, and at some point soon, we do need to tackle the real and growing problem of deficit and debt. And I'm looking forward to having that discussion, but let's make sure it is a discussion truly based on facts.

And if we're going to go down the road of the first step of setting the goal, then we need to very quickly get to step two and talk about what that plan looks like.

We don't want this to be, Mr. Chairman, what I have done for the last 30 years, and that is every New Year's Day having the resolution that this will be the year I finally get into shape. As I have come to learn, without an actionable plan, that continues to be an unfulfilled resolution every single year.