

Special Committee
*Special Committee on Deficit
Reduction*

Elena Zhou and Andy Zhu

Jack Miller

Committee Chairs

Elena Zhou – Chair

Elena Zhou is in her second year at MLWGS and the club. She has attended William and Mary Model Congress last year and helped out with Walker Model Congress. This year she hopes to expand her involvement as the MLW Model Congress Club Vice President of Public Relations. Along with Model Congress, she is extremely active in FPS, Model UN, Club Asia, and volleyball. When she finds an extra second in that hectic schedule of hers, she enjoys making waffles, brewing a nice warm cup of hot cocoa, and spending time at the ice rink. This year at Walker Model Congress 2013, she is ecstatic to be the Co-Chair of the Special Committee on Deficit Reduction with the amazing Co-Chair Andy Zhu. She hopes that she can see you all at the conference come April!

Andy Zhu – Chair

Andy Zhu, playfully known as "ZhuZhu Pet", is a Senior at MLWGS and the President of the club this year. As a senior member in the club, he has attended Harvard Model Congress, Princeton Model Congress, and William and Mary Model Congress. In addition to Model Congress, Andy is actively involved in Model UN, Club Asia, Robotics, Golf, and Basketball. With the little spare time he has, Andy likes to design cool websites, have fun with his friends, and of course, go dress shopping. At this year's Walker Model Congress, he is terribly excited to serve as the Co-Chair of the Special Committee on Deficit Reduction with the wonderful and coolest Co-Chair Elena Zhou. He hopes to meet you all at April's conference (not in a Facebook creeper way)!

Jack Miller – Vice Chair

Domestic Programs and Foreign Aid

<u>Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost (\$)</u>	<u>Conservative Opinion</u>	<u>Liberal Opinion</u>
Cut foreign aid in half	Foreign aid is the voluntary transfer of resources from one country to another. It has an objective of benefitting the recipient country, among other reasons. The two types of foreign aid include humanitarian aid and developmental aid.	17 billion	Foreign aid should be cut. With budgets tight, the government should put less focus on humanitarian aid.	Because foreign aid makes up only one percent of the overall federal budget, it should not be cut. Foreign aid complements military efforts to protect American interests abroad.
Eliminating Earmarks	Earmarks are legislative provisions that finance projects favored by a member of Congress.	14 billion	Federal earmarks should be banned. Scaling back on earmarks will force lawmakers to find a different way of funding their projects.	Earmarks should be kept because they fund many worthy projects beneficial to the nation, and do not cost taxpayers much money
Eliminating Farm Subsidies	Farm subsidies, also called agricultural subsidies, are paid to farmers and agribusinesses to supplement their income and manage agriculture.	14 billion	Farm subsidies help preserve the American agriculture industry. Eliminating subsidies could decrease independent family farmers.	Farmer subsidies distort workings of the market and largely flow to big agricultural businesses.
Federal Pay Cut by 5%	This option would be a one-time cut in federal civilian worker's salary by 5%. Paychecks would not be directly slashed. However, workers would have to pay 5% more in retirement benefits without increase in benefits.	17 billion	Private sector workers are asked to contribute more of the national debt, and federal workers should do the same.	Active and retired federal workers have already sacrificed enough with pay cuts meant to reduce the debt. Workers have increasing retirement costs and decreasing health benefits.

Reduce Federal Workforce by 10%	Current federal workforce size stands more than two million. With this passage, the federal workforce would be reduced by 200,000.	15 billion	Representative Bills (R-Rosemount) believes the federal workforce size, which has been rapidly growing, should be cut back so the private sector can grow.	Federal workers are unfairly being asked to shoulder the burden of the debt. Even though they are not part of the large deficit cause, federal workers must carry a weight of solving the nation's fiscal problems.
Cut 250,000 Government Contractors	A governmental contractor is a private company that produces goods and services under a contract of the government. In the past decade, governmental contract numbers have risen.	17 billion	The United States has wasted much money on contrasting services (eg. \$60 billion in Iraq and Afghanistan) when it could have been spent helping the deficit. The government pays more in taxpayer dollars to hire contractors than federal employees. ¹	Contractors provide useful services to the government. Many contractors earn their money without much government help. Sometimes, they provide services at a lower cost than the federal government.
Cut Aid to States by 5%	State aid has risen significantly in the past decade. This aid has contributed to the state's services, including healthcare, elderly services, education, and more.	42 billion	State aid should be cut by 5%. With 46 states currently aided by the government, this 5% cut would be extremely beneficial to the deficit.	State aid should not be cut by 5%. This amount of money helps the state with its services. Without the money, benefits would not be paid to individuals; employees would be laid off, and etc., resulting in a decrease of demand.
Reduce Veteran Income Security Benefits	This option would close enrollment for some individuals and un-enroll others. It would also reduce the veteran disability compensation, in addition to the Social Security compensations.	90 billion	Income security benefits should be reduced for veterans. Some veterans use this service to treat wounds not associated with military service.	Income security benefits should not be reduced for veterans. The veterans who have served bravely for our country should not carry the deficit burden by giving up their benefits.

¹ Simmons, Lee. "Government Contractors Face Spending Cuts." Bizmology - Business Viewpoints from the Editors at Hoover's. <http://bizmology.hoovers.com/2011/09/20/government-contractors-face-spending-cuts/> (accessed September 1, 2012). (foot1)

Cut Federal Funding of K-12 Education by 25%	This proposal would gradually reduce federal funding of K-12 Education. Currently, funding stands around 38 billion.	80 billion	Federal funding of K-12 education should be cut because it contributes to the deficit. However, it would not be completely ignored because states would thus become more responsible for funding it.	Federal funding of K-12 education should not be cut. With thousands of educators being laid off and class sizes becoming gradually larger, an education cut would jeopardize the future generation.
Limit Highway Funding	Each year, the government provides money to states for highway funding and transportation projects. This money comes from the Highway Trust Fund.	130 billion	In recent years, the Highway Trust Fund has exceeded revenue when spending on highways, and Congress had to aid it. Therefore, the highway funding should be limited.	Highway funding should not be limited because providing money for highways and other transportation projects helps American citizens with daily commute.
Convert SNAP into Block Grants	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also called food stamps, is federally-financed and provides food assistance to those with low incomes. This option gives states a limited amount, who would then be able to set their own standards for eligibility.	180 billion	SNAP should be converted to block grants because it gives states authority to set their own standards for eligibility and at the same time, reduces deficit.	SNAP should not be converted into block grants because it cuts food assistance for those with low incomes. Eligibility becomes stricter and those that need help may not always meet the standards.
Modify Federal Retiree Benefits	Under this option: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions would be increased in pension plans • Increase number of years used to calculate pensions (from 3 to 5) 	70 billion	Federal retiree benefits should be modified. Governmental workers should contribute as much as other working-class Americans do to the deficit.	Federal retiree benefits should not be changed. Federal workers have contributed more than plenty to the deficit and should not take additional money out of their retirement plans.

Cut TANF Program	The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program, or TANF, provides support for needy families for a restricted amount of time. This proposal will gradually cut funding in half.	30 billion	TANF funding should be cut because it is not the only program that provides assistance to low income families. The temporary assistance can be received elsewhere, too.	TANF funding should not be cut because it is a program that helps needy families get back up on their feet and search for economic opportunities while at the same time providing for their family.
Cut School Breakfast Programs	Currently, the federal government provides some money to states to help them operate children's meal programs. Under this option, the funding would be gradually reduced.	40 billion	The School Breakfast Program should be cut because it allows low income individuals to prioritize and gives them an incentive for searching for a job.	The School Breakfast Program should not be cut because it kicks many children to the curb and would probably cause others to go hungry for a part of the day.
Reduce Funding for Arts and Humanities	As of now, the federal government provides assistance to the Smithsonian Institution and the National Endowment for the Arts. This would reduce funding by 25 %	10 billion	Federal funding should be reduced for arts and humanities institutions. The institutions earn enough money to provide on their own without federal assistance.	Funding for arts and humanities institutions should not be reduced. This funding contributes to additional public galleries and awards for the institutions.
Introduce Out-of-Pocket Requirements for TRICARE	TRICARE for Life is a program for military retirees and their families who are not disabled. It has a small premium and little cost-sharing.	50 billion	Out-of-Pocket requirements should be required for TRICARE for Life. Non-disabled retirees have opportunities for a discovering a job.	TRICARE for Life should not require Out-of-Pocket requirements. Military retirees should not have to pay additionally for their services.

Defense

<u>Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost (\$)</u>	<u>Conservative Opinion</u>	<u>Liberal Opinion</u>
Reduce Nuclear Arsenal and Space Spending	This option would reduce: -Nuclear warheads (from 1968 to 1050) -Number of Minuteman missiles -Funding for nuclear research -Space missile defense	38 billion	Nuclear arsenal and space spending should not be reduced. Reducing these would greatly impact NASA and our defense.	There is no reason for the United States to hold so many nuclear weapons. Additionally, limiting weapons could open ways for USA and other countries to have arms control talks.
Reduce Military Size in Iraq/Afghan. and Troops in Eurasia	US Military presence in Europe and Asia would be reduced to 100,000 personnel. Moreover, the military in Iraq and Afghanistan would be reduced.	49 billion	Troop size should not be reduced in Eurasia and Iraq/Afghanistan. This would decrease the defense of the USA.	Troop size should be reduced in Eurasia and Iraq/Afghanistan. This would allow better relations between the United States and other countries
Reduce Navy & Air Force Fleets	The Navy ship number would shrink from 286 to 230 ships. Additionally, the Air Force would retire two tactical fighter wings and fighter jets.	24 billion	Navy fleets should not be reduced. If fleets are reduced, they cut back necessary military components for the security of the USA.	Spending on Naval fleets has increased in the past decade. Funding for other governmental works and education has been decreased as a result, and some reduction is necessary.
Reduce Joint Strike Fighter Program	This program was designed to develop a new, more complex aircraft. By reducing the program, the currently existing aircraft (F-16 and F/A-18) would be purchased.	16 billion	If the Joint Strike Fighter Program is cancelled, our Air Force would not make as much progress in technology.	The program should be cut because the existing aircraft is more than enough complex and results in significant savings.
Cancel Selective Weapons	This would cancel the purchase of expensive equipment and	18	Some weapons programs should not be canceled because they	Selective weapons programs should be canceled. The United States has an

Programs	delay purchases for research and developmental study.	billion	provide for the future defense of our nation. If canceled, the United States would be behind other nations in protection.	adequate amount of weapons. If we stock up less on weapons, our nation would fare better with international relations.
Reduce troop number in Iraq and Afghanistan to 30000 by 2013	Today, the US has 100000 troops in Afghanistan and 50000 troops in Iraq.	169 billion	Troop size should not be reduced in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our troops protect our defense and provide assistance in those countries.	Troop size should be reduced in Iraq and Afghanistan. This would allow better relations between the USA and Iraq/Afghanistan.
Reduce Noncombat Military Compensation	For veterans, this would mean a change in the healthcare plan [for those that were unwounded], a rise in premiums, and a reduction in combat tour years.	51 billion	Noncombat military compensation should not be reduced because it cuts benefits for the ones who serve our country.	Noncombat military compensation should be reduced because it allows for a reduction in combat tour years, permitting veterans to return home for longer periods of time.

Health Care

<u>Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost (\$)</u>	<u>Conservative Opinion</u>	<u>Liberal Opinion</u>
Replace Medicare with Premium Support	This proposal would replace Medicare with a 'premium support program'. The recipient would receive a voucher equal to the average per person cost in their country.	150 billion	Medicare should be replaced by a Premium Support program because the vouchers would grow at a slower rate than Medicare, earning money for the government. At the same time, recipients would still receive coverage.	Medicare should not be replaced by a Premium Support program. Because the vouchers would grow slower than Medicare had grown, recipients would not receive as much coverage as they once had.

Enact Medical Malpractice Reform	Medical malpractice is professional neglect by a health care provider, where the treatment causes injury or death to the patient.	13 billion	Medical malpractice reform should be enacted because it will lower costs, bring in junk lawsuits, and curb defensive medicine. ²	Medical malpractice reform should not be enacted. This would reduce a doctor's incentive to avoid errors in the future.
Increase Medicare Eligibility Age to 70	Medicare is a federal system of health insurance for people over 65 [currently] and younger people with disabilities.	104 billion	Medicare eligibility age should be increased. Because life spans are longer, working time should also be longer.	Medicare eligibility age should not be changed. Low income workers do not have as much increase in longevity and need Medicare the most.
Reduce tax breaks for employer-provided health insurance	The tax break for employer-provided health insurance would be slowly adjusted according to the cap. As time progresses, more employer spending on health insurance would be taxed.	157 billion	Tax breaks for employer-provided health insurance should be reduced. Employer-provided health insurance is excluded from federal income taxes, resulting in tremendous tax savings for workers. Reduction of tax breaks would save much money.	Tax breaks for employer-provided health insurance should not be reduced. Many employees depend on this health insurance and would not otherwise have the money to afford non-employer provided health insurance.
Cap Medicare Growth Starting in 2013	This proposal would bring Medicare growth down at GDP rate plus 1%, and would begin in 2013.	562 billion	Republicans are in favor of capping Medicare growth starting in 2013. Capping Medicare would crack down on hospitals/doctors with high costs.	Democrats are not in favor of capping Medicare growth starting in 2013. Low income individuals across the nation depend on Medicare and will continue depending on it. Capping Medicare would not benefit them.
Increase Medicare Cost-	This option would make: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost sharing uniform for all 		Medicare cost sharing should be increased. Currently, the cost	Medicare cost sharing should not be increased. Patients would not, in

² Tampa Bay Times. "Enact Medical Liability Reform." Politifact. <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/promises/gop-pledge-o-meter/promise/656/enact-medical-liability-reform/> (accessed September 1, 2012).

Sharing	<p>services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deductible and coinsurance rate uniform • Medigap restrict its ability to cover cost sharing 	130 billion	sharing program depends on what type of service was provided. With this option, all services would become equal.	some cases, receive as much coverage as they did before, which would impact the low income individuals.
Reduce Floor for Federal Matching Rates	Now, the federal government pays, on average, 57% for state Medicaid. The current floor states the government must pay at least half of each state's Medicaid program. This proposal would reduce 45% of the floor.	160 billion	The federal government should allow states to control their own Medicaid standards and rates. Therefore, the floor for federal matching rates should be reduced.	The floor for federal matching rates should not be reduced. If reduced, the state would not have as much money for Medicaid, which would impact low income families.

Social Security

<u>Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost (\$)</u>	<u>Conservative Opinion</u>	<u>Liberal Opinion</u>
Raise Social Security Retirement Age to 70	Social Security is a governmental program that provides monetary assistance to the unemployed, retired persons, and the disabled. Currently, the retirement age is 67.	247 billion	Social Security Retirement Age should be gradually raised. Life expectancy is growing and so retirement age should be increased too.	Moving the retirement age of Social Security up would not be beneficial to the wellbeing of older citizens and should not be implemented.

Reduce Social Security benefits for high income citizens	Workers below the 60 th percentile of lifetime earnings would have retirement benefits grow over time alongside wage increases. Benefits of top earners would grow more slowly with inflation.	54 billion	Citizens with higher incomes should have lower growth rates for Social Security benefits. They have enough money to sustain themselves throughout retirement years, unlike low income citizens.	Because the meaning of ‘higher incomes’ has not yet been established, there would be no defined cutoff for when benefits are reduced. Additionally, higher income citizens in retirement age rely on Social Security benefits.
Reduce Spousal Benefits	Currently, retired individuals receive either the benefits from their own earnings, or 50% of their spouse’s, whichever is higher. This proposal would reduce the 50% to 33%.	20 billion	Spousal benefits should be reduced because it can create injustice in some cases. Under current law, a dual-earner family would receive lower benefits than a single-earner family earning the same income.	Spousal benefits should not be reduced because it would be unfair to the single-earner family. With the passage of this option, single family earners would not receive an adequate amount of benefits.
Tighten Disability Eligibility	This option would focus on states with the loosest eligibility, and cut disability spending by 5%	17 billion	Eligibility for disability should be tightened. Nowadays, the average job is less physically demanding. In states with loose rules, a growing number of workers are labeled as ‘disabled’.	Disability eligibility should not be tightened. In our country, injured and ill workers still exist and do not have many good job aspects. With this proposal, they would be hurt.
Increase Years Used to Calculate Benefits	As of now, Social Security benefit amounts are calculated based on the average of the retiree’s 35 highest years of earning. This proposal would bring the number of years to 40.	50 billion	The number of years used to calculate benefits should be increased. Nowadays, most Americans work up to 40 years, and this allows them to factor in more years of high earnings.	The number of years should not be changed. For lower income individuals and the unemployed, this would factor in five additional ‘zero earning years’ into their benefits, which would decrease the value of the benefits.
Use Alternative Measure of Inflation	Currently, Social Security recipients receive a “Cost of Living Adjustment” to compensate for inflation.	110	Conservatives believe the Consumer Price Index overstates inflation. This new program could result to an annual 0.3%	The “chained CPI” program has never been tested out, so recipients do not know whether it is accurate or not. Therefore, the alternative

	Under this proposal, a “chained CPI” program would be used, which will supposedly correct inflation levels.	billion	less amount.	measure of inflation should not be implemented.
Include New Workers	Under this option, all new state and local workers would need to contribute to Social Security. As of now, some workers are not required to pay.	100 billion	New state and local workers should be included because they are working class Americans and have no reason to skip out.	New state and local workers should not be included because they are only starting out their jobs and should not be expected to contribute yet.

Taxes

<u>Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost (\$)</u>	<u>Conservative Opinion</u>	<u>Liberal Opinion</u>
Estate Taxes- Obama Proposal	An estate tax is a tax on your transferred properties after your death. It consists of everything you own. Under this proposal, any estate over \$3.5 million would be taxed by 45%.	45 billion	The estate tax should be removed in the United States because it is unfair. The money that is being passed down in family was fairly earned and taxes were paid in the person’s life.	The estate tax should not be removed because it restricts certain generations from hoarding wealth throughout the generation. An estate tax would not close the gap between the rich and poor.
Investment Taxes- Obama Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Gains/Dividends untaxed for income under \$68000 • 20% tax for those that make \$250000 and above • 15% for everyone else 	24 billion	The Investment Taxes should not be put into effect because they tax the rich a significant amount. The upper income earners are the ones that contribute the most to the economy.	The Investment Taxes proposed by President Obama should go into effect because they split the tax evenly between the lower, middle, and upper income levels.

Bush Tax Cuts- Allow Expiration for \$250000/yr and above	This option would eliminate the tax cuts for those that made income above \$250000, otherwise known as the top 2%.	115 billion	These Bush tax cuts should not be eliminated for those that make \$2500000 a year and above. By <i>expiring</i> it, rates for job creators and small businesses would be raised.	The Bush tax cuts should be expired for those that make over \$250000 a year. These individuals can afford slightly higher tax rates, which can then be used to aid the government.
Millionaire's Tax on Income above 1 Million	This option would create a 5.4% surtax on income above 1 million.	95 billion	There should not be a millionaire's tax because it taxes the individuals that have money and power, which would discourage investment.	Millionaire's tax should be implemented. They can afford the tax and have more money to spare than regular citizens.
Eliminate Life Insurance Tax Benefits	Presently, the death of an insured person receives life insurance benefits that are exempt from taxation. With the passage of this option, benefits would be subject to individual income tax.	280 billion	Life Insurance Tax Benefits should be eliminated. It contributes a significant amount to the country.	Life Insurance Tax Benefits should not be eliminated because it adds an extra burden to the deceased person's close members.
National Sales Tax	A sales tax is also called a tax on consumption. This proposal would tax all of what consumers buy with the exception of education, housing, and charitable giving.	281 billion	This sales tax would contribute greatly to the state of our deficit. The money gained from the sales tax would be given to our local, state, and federal government.	This sales tax should not be implemented because it would disproportionately penalize working customers and the lower income individuals. It would also decrease spending.
Bank Tax	The Bank tax would tax banks based on their holdings- both the size of the holdings and the riskiness of them.	103 billion	The Bank tax should not be put into effect because it decreases the amount of money the bank has, therefore making banks unwilling to lend.	The Bank tax should be put into effect because it discourages large banks from taking big risks and helps cover future costs of financial crises.
Cut The Earned Income Tax	The EITC is a way to support families with children who	11	The EITC should be cut because it helps the deficit. Low income	The EITC should not be cut because families rely on this program to aid

Credit (EITC)	have low income.	billion	families with one child have other programs that can support them.	their lacking incomes.
Carbon Tax	A carbon tax is a tax on hydrocarbon fuels, like coal, petroleum, and natural gas.	71 billion	The carbon tax should be implemented because it would limit the amount of carbon emissions in our nation, thereby helping the environment.	The carbon tax should not be put into effect because it would increase the price of CO ₂ , vital for the working class Americans.

Revenues

<u>Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost (\$)</u>	<u>Conservative Opinion</u>	<u>Liberal Opinion</u>
Increase Gas Tax	Currently, the gas tax is as 18.4 cents per gallon, and the revenue is put into the Highway Trust Fund. This option would increase the Gas Tax by 10 cents, bringing it up to 28.4 cents per gallon.	120 billion	Increasing the Gas Tax would reduce the consumption of gas and therefore reduce carbon emissions.	The federal Gas Tax is already too high. Increasing the tax would harm working-class Americans and specific industries.
Impose Financial Crisis Responsibility Fee	The largest financial firms, with over 50 billion in assets, would be required to pay a fee to compensate taxpayers.	80 billion	This Financial Crisis Responsibility Fee should not be implemented. It takes away money from the largest institutions and slows economic growth in them, which impacts the nation.	The Financial Crisis Responsibility Fee should be imposed. Large financial firms who are doing successfully in this economy have money to spare and owe it to the American people.

Enact the Buffett Rule	The Buffett Rule ensures that people who make over 1 million each year should pay at least 30% of their income in taxes.	160 billion	The Buffett Rule should not be executed. This raises taxes on individuals that contribute the most investments and capital to feed our country, and would raise taxes on the 'job creators'. ³	The Buffett Rule should be implemented because the upper income class has more money to spare to contribute to the country.
Sell Unneeded Federal Assets	The government would sell off 3.3 million acres of land in the Southwest to the highest bidders.	10 billion	The unneeded land should be sold because it would save money, collect revenue, and reduce public ownership. ⁴	The land should not be sold because it contains national parks and other public places important to the general population.

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⁴ Public Lands Team. "GOP Budget Calls For Fire Sale Of Public Lands While Preserving \$40 Billion In Tax Breaks To Big Oil ." ThinkProgress. <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/03/21/449046/gop-budget-calls-for-fire-sale-of-public-lands-while-preserving-40-billion-in-tax-breaks-to-big-oil/> (accessed September 1, 2012).

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