



A Closer Look

The Super Committee: Where They Stand on Medicaid, Medicare, and The Affordable Care Act

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Introduction

As part of the deal to raise the debt ceiling and avoid a U.S. default on our obligations, Congressional leadership appointed a “super committee” of 12 members of Congress – six Democrats and six Republicans. They have been tasked with reducing the deficit by \$1.5 trillion over the next 10 years. The super committee must present its plan to Congress by Thanksgiving.

This piece profiles the members of that committee, providing information about their stance on Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act, as well as where they stand regarding the inclusion of revenue as part of a debt reduction plan. Members of the committee are listed in alphabetical order by party affiliation, with the House members listed first.

If one of the super committee members represents you, it’s important that you contact him or her, particularly at key points during this process. **Even if none of the super committee members represent you, your voice is still critical.** You should contact the 12 members and share your opinions. After all, they are making decisions that affect you. It is also crucial that you tell your Senators and Representatives what you think. The super committee members are their colleagues; they can communicate your message. Furthermore, in December Congress will have to vote on the super committee’s plan, so it is important that your Senators and Representatives know where you—one of their constituents—stand.

For more information on key points in the process, see this [Debt Deal and Budget Timetable](#).

Super Committee Members

Democrats

Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
Rep. James Clyburn (D-SC)
Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT)
Sen. John Kerry (D-MA)
Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), co-chair

Republicans

Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI)
Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), co-chair
Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI)
Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ)
Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH)
Sen. Pat Toomey (R-PA)

Super Committee Member Profiles

Democrats, House of Representatives

Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)

First elected: 1992

Vice Chair, House Democratic Caucus; Member, Ways and Means Committee; Member, Progressive Caucus; House's highest-serving Latino

Medicaid In July, he signed a letter to President Obama, urging him to reject cuts to Medicaid in debt ceiling negotiations.

Medicare He has said he is open to Medicare cuts if they are linked with tax increases, but he strongly opposes vouchers.

He co-sponsored the 2007 bill mandating the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate lower Medicare prescription drug Part D prices.

ACA He was a champion of the health care reform legislation.

Revenue He favors eliminating tax breaks and subsidies for wealthy individuals and oil companies.

He opposes renewing the Bush tax cuts for the top 2 percent of earners in 2013.

Other He has been a particular defender of Social Security, ensuring benefits are not cut.

He served on the Bowles-Simpson deficit reduction commission and was one of seven who opposed the panel's final recommendations.

Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-SC)

First elected: 1992

Assistant Minority Leader; Member, Congressional Black Caucus; House's highest-serving African American

Medicaid He has said government safety-net programs "should not be shredded" and argues they are not causing the deficit problem.

Medicare He voted against limited prescription drug benefits for Medicare beneficiaries.

ACA He is a strong advocate of the health care law.

Revenue He voted “yes” on extending the Alternative Minimum Tax exemptions to avoid tax increases for the middle class.

He voted against making the Bush tax cuts permanent.

He opposed eliminating the estate tax.

Other He is a close ally of Democratic Leader, Nancy Pelosi.

He has been a vocal supporter of job creation in low-income neighborhoods.

This spring and summer, he took part in bipartisan talks on the debt ceiling with Vice President Biden.

Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)

First elected: 2002

Ranking member, House Budget Committee

**Medicaid
Medicare** He offered his own budget plan that excluded Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security cuts, and he strongly opposed the Ryan budget plan.

ACA He was a champion of the Affordable Care Act.

Revenue He favors eliminating tax breaks and deductions for individuals earning more than \$500,000 a year, wealthy corporations, and oil and gas companies.

Other He was a Democratic Representative in talks with Vice President Biden and Republicans on the debt ceiling issue.

Democrats, Senate

Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT)

First elected: 1978

Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Medicaid This spring, he said he is willing to consider the President's proposed blended Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) rate.

Medicare He said he would agree to Medicare cuts if Republicans raise taxes.

ACA He was the top champion for the Affordable Care Act.

Revenue As Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, he took a hard line in opposing the extension of the Bush-era tax cuts, which he co-authored, to the richest 2 percent of Americans. He has signaled some willingness to tax job-based health benefits.

Other He has been a key player in almost every domestic policy issue of the past decade, beginning with his bipartisan work with the 2001 Bush-era tax cuts and the creation of Medicare's prescription drug program in 2003.

Baucus played a lead role for Senate Democrats in the spring debt ceiling negotiations led by Vice President Biden.

Sen. John Kerry (D-MA)

First elected: 1984

Senior member, Senate Finance Committee; Chair, Foreign Relations Committee

Medicaid He has consistently supported increases in FMAP.

Medicare He supported the Medicare Part D legislation.

ACA He was a champion of the Affordable Care Act.

Revenue He has voiced support for a "balanced" deal that could include increased tax revenue and deep cuts to entitlement programs. He favors a simplified tax code. He supports middle-class tax cuts and closing corporate tax loopholes. He supported Bush tax cuts for the middle class, and pledged not to raise taxes on those earning less than \$200,000 a year. He voted "yes" on the last extension of the Bush tax cuts for everyone.

Other He has not specialized in domestic policy, but has been an expert on diplomacy, becoming Foreign Relations Committee Chairman in 2009 after Biden left the Senate.

Kerry has taken up an elder statesman role in the Senate and has become a bipartisan legislator, beginning with his work on approving a nuclear arms treaty last December and continuing this summer with Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) in shoring up support for the mission in Libya.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA)

First elected: 1992

Chair, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; Senior member, Senate Budget Committee; Senior member, Senate Appropriations Committee

Medicaid She has supported increases in FMAP and strongly opposes block grants.

Medicare She has said she would favor replacing the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) with a system that more accurately reflects costs and quality of care. She also introduced the MediFair Act, which would ensure that no state receives less than the national average of Medicare reimbursement rates.

ACA She is a staunch supporter of the new health care law.

Revenue She voted for tax cuts to the middle class but remains opposed to continued tax cuts for the wealthy.

Other She survived a difficult re-election in 2010 and is poised to take on senior positions in the Senate.

With Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND) retiring next year, she is in line to chair the panel.

She has been a member of the top leadership for the last five years and is a respected liberal in the caucus.

Super Committee Member Profiles

Republicans, House of Representatives

Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI)

First elected: 1990

Chair, House Ways and Means Committee; Chair, Joint Committee on Taxation; Member, Republican Study Committee

Medicaid He supports block granting Medicaid.

Medicare He supported Paul Ryan's budget plan to privatize Medicare, but wavered at first.

ACA He introduced legislation in the Ways and Means Committee to repeal the health care law.

Revenue According to a Reuters report, Rep. Camp would not rule out tax increases if they fostered economic growth, even adding "everything is on the table" in the super committee deliberations. "I don't want to rule anything in or out," Camp said. "I am willing to discuss all issues that might help us reduce our short and long-term debt and grow our economy." He supports extending Bush tax cuts to everyone and also would like a major overhaul of the federal tax code. He is in favor of lowering the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 25 percent.

Other He voted in favor of the debt ceiling compromise.

He has already been at work with Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) on tax reform issues, and he has placed the goal of comprehensive tax reform high on his agenda.

He played a key role in drafting the 1996 welfare reform bill.

He served on the Bowles-Simpson deficit reduction commission, opposing its recommendations.

Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX)

First elected: 2002

Chair, House Republican Conference (4th ranking member of leadership team); Senior member, Financial Services Committee; Former chair, Republican Study Committee

Medicaid He has called Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security "cruel ponzi schemes" and
Medicare believes they are the biggest drivers of the national debt. Yet, he has also admitted these programs have been "of great comfort and assistance to my grandparents and parents."

ACA He often cites a story about his mother having emergency surgery to remove a tumor and argues that her positive outcome may not have been like that in other countries with single-payer systems. “I don’t want this President or any President or his bureaucrat or commissions making decisions for my loved ones. Let’s repeal it today, replace it tomorrow.”

Revenue He co-sponsored the Taxpayer Choice Act, which would create a simplified two-tiered individual tax structure and permanently repeal the Alternative Minimum Tax. He supports family and small business tax incentives. He also has co-sponsored legislation to enact the Balanced Budget Amendment. He supports extending the Bush tax cuts to everyone.

Other He voted in favor of the debt ceiling compromise.

He has a close relationship with House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA).

He served on the Bowles-Simpson deficit reduction commission, opposing the panel’s recommendations.

Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI)

First elected: 1986

Chair, Energy and Commerce Committee

Medicaid He favors a block grant. In a letter addressed to governors in May, he wrote that services provided in Medicaid are not as good as care provided to Medicare beneficiaries or privately insured patients.

Medicare He favors privatizing Medicare. In the past, he has voted for a bill that said no budget surplus could be spent until solvency for Medicare and Social Security were guaranteed.

ACA He supports repealing the Affordable Care Act.

Revenue He opposes all proposals for raising taxes on consumers and businesses. He also opposes efforts to create a value-added tax. He wants to eliminate the estate tax and opposes taxes on energy companies. He favors a permanent extension of the Bush tax cuts for everyone.

Other He voted in favor of the debt ceiling compromise.

Before his election to Congress, Upton worked for several years at the Office of Management and Budget under his political mentor (and former Michigan Congressman) David Stockman during the Reagan administration.

Republicans, Senate

Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ)

First elected: 1994

Senate Minority Whip; Senior member, Senate Finance Committee

Medicaid He supports block granting Medicaid.

Medicare He voted for the Ryan budget plan and favors privatizing Medicare.

ACA He has proposed a bill to repeal provisions in the Affordable Care Act, including the tax credits in the Exchange and the employer responsibility requirements.

Revenue He has said tax increases would “stifle” job creation. He stood by Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) in previous debt ceiling negotiations, refusing to raise taxes. He favors corporate and individual tax reform and supported an extension of Bush tax cuts to everyone.

Other He voted in favor of the debt ceiling compromise.

He is close to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), respected by conservatives and a major supporter of defense spending.

He has announced he will retire next year.

He served as a lead Republican negotiator on the debt ceiling issue in talks led by Vice President Biden.

Kyl has signed a pledge pushed by Grover Norquist and Americans for Tax Reform promising not to raise taxes.

Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH)

First elected: 2010

Deputy Minority Whip; Member, Senate Budget Committee

Medicaid He said he liked the Gang of Six plan because it took on the “sacred cow”—and capped health spending, but he didn’t think it went far enough in reforming entitlements.

Medicare He is one of five senators who declined to sign a letter drafted by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) aimed at blocking Dr. Don Berwick’s appointment to head the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). He voted in support of the Ryan budget plan.

ACA The first bill he introduced when he joined the Senate would have repealed the health care law.

Revenue He has said reforming the tax code will be central to generating more revenue and spurring economic growth. He favors eliminating the estate tax and wants to increase IRS accountability. He introduced a bill to cut employers' share of payroll taxes by two percent a year.

Other He voted in favor of the debt ceiling compromise.

He served for more than 12 years in the House, including as a member of the Ways and Means Committee, leaving in 2005 to become director of the Office of Management and Budget under President George Bush.

He is especially close with fellow Ohioan, Speaker John Boehner, and is close with other Senate Republican freshmen.

He has a serious-minded and somewhat moderate reputation, but hails from a critical swing state and may not be interested in brokering a deal that could anger fellow Republicans.

He has signed a pledge pushed by Grover Norquist and Americans for Tax Reform promising not to raise taxes.

He has said the "Pentagon has to be part of the discussion" when looking at how to reduce the deficit.

Sen. Pat Toomey (R-PA)

First elected: 2010

Member, Senate Budget Committee; Member, Joint Economic Committee

Medicaid He introduced his own budget plan which would have turned Medicaid into a block grant.

Medicare He favors the Ryan budget plan. Toomey's budget plan also would have reduced payments to hospitals, nursing homes, and other providers.

ACA His budget plan would repeal most of the health coverage expansions in the Affordable Care Act.

Revenue Toomey told reporters that the tax code has "indefensible" special-interest tax breaks that could be considered in the special committee. The Senator said he was not interested in any large tax increases, which he said could hurt the economy. He voted to end the ethanol tax subsidy, and he advocates lowering the U.S. corporate tax rate. He wants to repeal the estate tax and favors corporate and individual tax reform.

Other

He voted against the the debt ceiling compromise.

Senator Toomey's decision to challenge longtime senator, Arlen Specter, for the 2010 Republican nomination for Senate in Pennsylvania pushed Specter to switch to the Democratic Party. After Rep. Joe Sestak defeated Specter for the Democratic nomination, Toomey was elected to the Senate.

In 2004, Senator Toomey became president of the Club for Growth, a conservative group that has challenged GOP moderates in primary campaigns, and he is considered a hard-line vote against higher taxes.

Toomey has signed a pledge pushed by Grover Norquist and Americans for Tax Reform promising not to raise taxes.

He has said defense cuts should be on the table in deficit reduction talks.

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1201 New York Avenue NW, Suite 1100 ■ Washington, DC 20005

Phone: 202-628-3030 ■ Email: info@familiesusa.org

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