

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 473

To establish a commission to develop legislation designed to reform tax policy and entitlement benefit programs and ensure a sound fiscal future for the United States, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 16, 2007

Mr. WOLF (for himself, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. COBLE, Mrs. MYRICK, and Mr. CULBERSON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Budget, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To establish a commission to develop legislation designed to reform tax policy and entitlement benefit programs and ensure a sound fiscal future for the United States, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-  
2       tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Securing America’s  
5       Future Economy Commission Act” or the “SAFE Com-  
6       mission Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT.**

2       There is established a commission to be known as the  
3    “Securing America’s Future Economy Commission”  
4 (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the “Commission”).

5 **SEC. 3. DUTIES OF COMMISSION.**

6       (a) **MANDATORY LEGISLATION DEVELOPMENT.—**

7           (1) **ISSUES TO ADDRESS.—**The Commission  
8    shall examine the long-term fiscal challenges facing  
9    the United States and develop legislation designed to  
10   address the following issues:

11           (A) The unsustainable imbalance between  
12    long-term Federal spending commitments and  
13    projected revenues.

14           (B) Increasing net national savings to pro-  
15    vide for domestic investment and economic  
16    growth.

17           (C) The implications of foreign ownership  
18    of debt instruments issued by the United States  
19    Government.

20           (D) Improving the budget process to place  
21    greater emphasis on long-term fiscal issues.

22           (2) **POLICY SOLUTIONS.—**Legislation developed  
23    to address the issues described in paragraph (1) may  
24    include the following:

1 (A) Reforms that limit the growth of entitlement spending to ensure that the programs  
2 are fiscally sustainable.

4 (B) Reforms that strengthen the safety net  
5 functions of entitlement programs to provide  
6 assistance to the neediest people.

7 (C) Reforms that make United States tax  
8 laws more efficient and more conducive to en-  
9 couraging economic growth.

10 (D) Incentives to increase private savings.

11 (E) Any other reforms designed to address  
12 the issues described in paragraph (1).

13 (b) OPTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF COST ESTIMATE

## 14 ALTERNATIVES.—

20 (2) SPECIFICALLY.—Any such alternative meth-  
21 od must—

22 (A) be designed to address any short-  
23 comings in the method currently used with re-  
24 gard to estimating the positive economic effects  
25 of legislation; and

1 (B) consider the use of automatic stabi-  
2 lizers or triggers to enforce spending and rev-  
3 enue targets, in the event that policies based on  
4 the alternative method fail to achieve targets  
5 for outlays and revenues.

## 9 SEC. 4. INITIAL TOWN HALL STYLE PUBLIC HEARINGS.

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall hold at  
11 least 1 town hall style public hearing within each Federal  
12 reserve district, and shall, to the extent feasible, ensure  
13 that there is broad public participation in the hearings.

14 (b) HEARING FORMAT.—During each hearing, the  
15 Commission shall present to the public, and generate com-  
16 ments and suggestions regarding, the issues described in  
17 section 3, policies designed to address the issues, and  
18 tradeoffs between the policies.

## 19 SEC. 5. REPORT.

20 The Commission shall, not later than 1 year after the  
21 date of the enactment of this Act, submit a report to Con-  
22 gress and the President containing the following:

23 (1) A detailed description of the activities of the  
24 Commission.

7 (4) A detailed description of the long-term fis-  
8 cal problems faced by the United States.

11 (6) Criteria for the legislative proposal to be de-  
12 veloped by the Commission.

## 13 SEC. 6. LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL.

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the  
15 date the report is submitted under section 5 and by a vote  
16 of three-fourths of the members, the Commission shall  
17 submit a legislative proposal to Congress and the Presi-  
18 dent designed to address the issues described section 3.

19 (b) PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS.—The proposal must,  
20 to the extent feasible, be designed—

21 (1) to achieve generational equity and long-term  
22 economic stability;

23 (2) to address the comments and suggestions of  
24 the public; and

1 (3) to meet the criteria set forth in the Com-  
2 mission report.

3 (c) INCLUSION OF COST ESTIMATE.—The Commis-  
4 sion shall submit with the proposal—

5 (1) a long-term CBO cost estimate prepared  
6 under section 14 for the proposal; and

## 10 SEC. 7. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS.

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall be com-  
12 posed of 16 voting members appointed pursuant to para-  
13 graph (1) and 2 nonvoting members described in para-  
14 graph (2).

15 (1) VOTING MEMBERS.—The Commission shall  
16 be composed of 16 voting members of whom—

19 (B) one shall be the Secretary of the  
20 Treasury:

21 (C) four shall be appointed by the Speaker  
22 of the House of Representatives:

23 (D) three shall be appointed by the Minor-  
24 ity Leader of the House of Representatives:

(F) three shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate.

15 (b) LIMITATIONS AS TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.—

16 (1) FOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ON COMMIS-  
17 SION.—Each appointing authority described in sub-  
18 section (a)(1) who is a Member of Congress shall ap-  
19 point 1 Member of Congress to the Commission but  
20 may not appoint more than 1 Member of Congress  
21 to the Commission.

22 (2) CONTINUATION OF VOTING MEMBERSHIP.—  
23 In the case of an individual appointed pursuant to  
24 subsection (a)(1) who was appointed as a Member of  
25 Congress under paragraph (1), if such individual

1 ceases to be a Member of Congress, that individual  
2 shall cease to be a member of the Commission.

3 (c) DATE FOR ORIGINAL APPOINTMENT.—The ap-  
4 pointing authorities described in subsection (a)(1) shall  
5 appoint the initial members of the Commission not later  
6 than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

7 (d) TERMS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The term of each member is  
9 for the life of the Commission.

10 (2) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission  
11 shall be filled not later than 30 days after such va-  
12 cancy occurs and in the manner in which the origi-  
13 nal appointment was made.

14 (e) PAY AND REIMBURSEMENT.—

15 (1) NO COMPENSATION FOR MEMBERS OF COM-  
16 MISSION.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a  
17 member of the Commission may not receive pay, al-  
18 lowances, or benefits by reason of their service on  
19 the Commission.

20 (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall  
21 receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of  
22 subsistence under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title  
23 5, United States Code.

1        (f) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet upon  
2 the call of the chairperson or a majority of its voting mem-  
3 bers.

4        (g) QUORUM.—Six voting members of the Commis-  
5 sion shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may  
6 hold hearings.

7 **SEC. 8. DIRECTOR AND STAFF OF COMMISSION.**

8        (a) DIRECTOR.—

9            (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (c)  
10 and to the extent provided in advance in appropria-  
11 tion Acts, the Commission shall appoint and fix the  
12 pay of a director.

13            (2) DUTIES.—The director of the Commission  
14 shall be responsible for the administration and co-  
15 ordination of the duties of the Commission and shall  
16 perform other such duties as the Commission may  
17 direct.

18            (b) STAFF.—In accordance with rules agreed upon  
19 by the Commission, subject to subsection (c), and to the  
20 extent provided in advance in appropriation Acts, the di-  
21 rector may appoint and fix the pay of additional personnel.

22            (c) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE  
23 LAWS.—The director and staff of the Commission may be  
24 appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5,  
25 United States Code, governing appointments in the com-

1     petitive service, and may be paid without regard to the  
2     provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53  
3     of that title relating to classification and General Schedule  
4     pay rates, except that pay fixed under subsection (a) may  
5     not exceed \$150,000 per year and pay fixed under sub-  
6     section (b) may not exceed a rate equal to the daily equiva-  
7     lent of the annual rate of basic pay for level V of the Exec-  
8     utive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5, United States  
9     Code.

10           (d) DETAILEES.—Any Federal Government employee  
11     may be detailed to the Commission without reimbursement  
12     from the Commission, and such detailee shall retain the  
13     rights, status, and privileges of their regular employment  
14     without interruption.

15           (e) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—In accordance  
16     with rules agreed upon by the Commission and to the ex-  
17     tent provided in advance in appropriation Acts, the direc-  
18     tor may procure the services of experts and consultants  
19     under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, but  
20     at rates not to exceed the daily equivalent of the annual  
21     rate of basic pay for level V of the Executive Schedule  
22     under section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.

23     **SEC. 9. POWERS OF COMMISSION.**

24           (a) HEARINGS AND EVIDENCE.—The Commission  
25     may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act, hold such

1 hearings in addition to the town hall style public hearings,  
2 sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony,  
3 and receive such evidence as the Commission considers ap-  
4 propriate. The Commission may administer oaths or affir-  
5 mations to witnesses appearing before it.

6 (b) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any mem-  
7 ber or agent of the Commission may, if authorized by the  
8 Commission, take any action which the Commission is au-  
9 thorized to take under this section.

10 (c) MAI LS.—The Commission may use the United  
11 States mails in the same manner and under the same con-  
12 ditions as other departments and agencies of the United  
13 States.

14 (d) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon  
15 the request of the Commission, the Administrator of Gen-  
16 eral Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reim-  
17 bursable basis, the administrative support services nec-  
18 essary for the Commission to carry out its responsibilities  
19 under this Act.

20 (e) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—To the extent provided  
21 in advance in appropriation Acts, the Commission may  
22 enter into contracts to enable the Commission to discharge  
23 its duties under this Act.

24 (f) GIFTS.—The Commission may accept, use, and  
25 dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

1 **SEC. 10. TERMINATION.**

2 The Commission shall terminate the earlier of—

3 (1) 60 days after submitting its legislative pro-  
4 posal; or5 (2) the date on which the Comptroller General  
6 of the United States determines and publishes in the  
7 Federal Register a statement that new legislation  
8 has been enacted that is estimated to reduce the fis-  
9 cal gap by—10 (A) 1 percent of gross domestic product,  
11 measured over the 20-year period beginning  
12 with the first fiscal year after the date of enact-  
13 ment of such legislation; and14 (B) 2 percent of gross domestic product,  
15 measured over the 50-year period beginning  
16 with the first fiscal year after the date of enact-  
17 ment of such legislation.18 **SEC. 11. ALTERNATIVE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL OF PRESI-  
19 DENT.**20 The President may, not later than 90 calendar days  
21 after the Commission submits its legislative proposal, sub-  
22 mit to Congress an alternative to the legislative proposal  
23 submitted by the Commission.

1 **SEC. 12. ALTERNATIVE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL FROM THE**  
2 **COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET.**

3 (a) **FROM COMMITTEE.**—The Committee on the  
4 Budget of either House may, in consultation with the rel-  
5 evant committees of their respective House and not later  
6 than 90 calendar days after the Commission submits its  
7 legislative proposal, have published in the Congressional  
8 Record an alternative to the legislative proposal submitted  
9 by the Commission.

10 (b) **FROM RANKING MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE.**—  
11 The ranking minority member of the Committee on the  
12 Budget of either House may, not later than 90 calendar  
13 days after the Commission submits its legislative proposal,  
14 have published in the Congressional Record an alternative  
15 to the legislative proposal submitted by the Commission.

16 **SEC. 13. CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION.**

17 (a) **INTRODUCTION.**—Not later than the fifth legisla-  
18 tive day after the Commission submits its legislative pro-  
19 posal, the majority leader of each House, or his designee,  
20 shall introduce (by request) the legislation submitted by  
21 the Commission.

22 (b) **IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.**—

23 (1) **PRIVILEGED CONSIDERATION.**—In the  
24 House of Representatives, the legislation shall be re-  
25 ported to the Committee on the Budget, which shall  
26 report the bill without substantive revision. If the

1       Committee on the Budget has not reported the legis-  
2       lation before the expiration of the 90-day period de-  
3       scribed in section 12, then—

4                   (A) that committee shall be discharged  
5                   from consideration of the legislation;

6                   (B) the legislation shall be placed on the  
7                   appropriate calendar; and

8                   (C) a motion to proceed to the consider-  
9       ation of the legislation shall be highly privileged  
10      and shall not be debatable, and a motion to re-  
11      consider the vote by which the motion is dis-  
12      posed of shall not be in order.

13               (2) CONSIDERATION CONSISTENT WITH CON-  
14       GRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT.—Consideration of such  
15       legislation shall be pursuant to the procedures set  
16       forth in paragraphs (2), (5), and (6) of section  
17       305(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to  
18       the extent not inconsistent with this Act.

19               (3) AMENDMENTS LIMITED.—

20               (A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in  
21       subparagraph (B), an amendment to the legis-  
22       lation may not be offered in the House of Rep-  
23       resentatives.

24               (B) PERMITTED AMENDMENTS.—(i) Any  
25       Member may offer, as an amendment in the na-

ture of a substitute, the alternative legislative proposal submitted by the President.

14 (C) POINT OF ORDER.—

15 (i) IN GENERAL.—An amendment of-  
16 fered under subparagraph (B) is subject to  
17 a point of order if—

18 (I) the amendment is not accom-  
19 panied by a long-term CBO cost esti-  
20 mate of the amendment or a long-  
21 term revenue estimate of the amend-  
22 ment, which includes the information  
23 described in section 14, by the Joint  
24 Committee on Taxation; or

1 (II) it would increase the deficit  
2 or cause a deficit either for the period  
3 of the first 20 fiscal years beginning  
4 with the first fiscal year after the cur-  
5 rent fiscal year or for the period of  
6 the first 50 fiscal years beginning  
7 with the first fiscal year after the cur-  
8 rent fiscal year, as judged against the  
9 baseline.

10 (ii) BASELINE.—For purposes of  
11 clause (i)(II), the baseline shall be cal-  
12 culated using the assumption that the leg-  
13 islation submitted by the Commission has  
14 been enacted into law, subject to the limi-  
15 tation imposed by section 14(d).

16 (iii) WAIVER.—A point of order raised  
17 under clause (i) may only be waived or sus-  
18 pended in the House of Representatives by  
19 a resolution devoted solely to the subject of  
20 waiving that point of order.

21 (D) MULTIPLE AMENDMENTS.—If more  
22 than one amendment is offered under this para-  
23 graph, then each amendment shall be consid-  
24 ered separately, and the amendment receiving

1           both a majority and the highest number of  
2           votes shall be the amendment adopted.

3           (4) TRANSMITTAL TO THE SENATE.—If the leg-  
4           islation passed in the House of Representatives pur-  
5           suant to this section, the Clerk of the House of Rep-  
6           resentatives shall cause the legislation to be en-  
7           grossed, certified, and transmitted to the Senate not  
8           later than 1 calendar day after the day on which the  
9           legislation is passed. Such legislation shall be re-  
10           ferred to the Senate Committee on the Budget.

11           (c) IN THE SENATE.—

12           (1) AUTOMATIC DISCHARGE OF SENATE BUDG-  
13           ET COMMITTEE.—If the Senate Committee on the  
14           Budget has not reported the legislation before the  
15           expiration of the 90-day period described in section  
16           12, then—

17               (A) the committee shall be discharged from  
18               consideration of the legislation; and

19               (B) a motion to proceed to the consider-  
20               ation of the legislation is highly privileged and  
21               is not debatable.

22           (2) CONSIDERATION.—Consideration of such  
23           legislation shall be pursuant to the procedures set  
24           forth in paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (6) of section

1       305(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to  
2       the extent not inconsistent with this Act.

3           (3) AMENDMENTS LIMITED.—

4               (A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in  
5               subparagraph (B), an amendment to the legis-  
6               lation may not be offered in the Senate.

7               (B) PERMITTED AMENDMENTS.—(i) Any  
8               Member may offer, as an amendment in the na-  
9               ture of a substitute, the alternative legislative  
10               proposal submitted by the President.

11               (ii) The chairman of the Senate Committee  
12               on the Budget may offer, as an amendment in  
13               the nature of a substitute, the alternative legis-  
14               lative proposal published in the Congressional  
15               Record by the Senate Committee on the Budg-  
16               et.

17               (iii) The ranking minority member of the  
18               Senate Committee on the Budget may offer, as  
19               an amendment in the nature of a substitute,  
20               the alternative legislative proposal published in  
21               the Congressional Record by such ranking mi-  
22               nority member.

23               (C) POINT OF ORDER.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—An amendment offered under subparagraph (B) is subject to a point of order if—

(I) the amendment is not accompanied by a long-term CBO cost estimate of the amendment or a long-term revenue estimate of the amendment, which includes the information described in section 14, by the Joint Committee on Taxation; or

(II) it would increase the deficit or cause a deficit either for the period of the first 20 fiscal years beginning with the first fiscal year after the current fiscal year or for the period of the first 50 fiscal years beginning with the first fiscal year after the current fiscal year, as judged against the baseline.

(ii) **BASELINE.**—For purposes of clause (i)(II), the baseline shall be calculated using the assumption that the legislation submitted by the Commission has been enacted into law, subject to the limitation imposed by section 14(d).

6 (D) MULTIPLE AMENDMENTS.—If more  
7 than one amendment is offered under this para-  
8 graph, then each amendment shall be consid-  
9 ered separately, and the amendment receiving  
0 both a majority and the highest number of  
1 votes shall be the amendment adopted.

12 (d) PROHIBITION ON CONCURRENT CONSIDERATION  
13 OF OTHER BUDGET-RELATED LEGISLATION —

22 (A) provides new budget authority for any  
23 fiscal year:

(B) provides for an increase in outlays for any fiscal year:

(C) provides a decrease in revenues during any fiscal year; or

(D) provides an increase in the public debt limit to become effective during any fiscal year.

5 Subparagraphs (A) through (D) shall be applied on  
6 a provision-by-provision basis.

22 (3) WAIVER.—

23 (A) HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—In the  
24 House of Representatives, if a special rule is  
25 considered that would waive points of order

1                   pursuant to paragraph (1), a motion to strike  
2                   the provision waiving such points of order shall  
3                   be in order.

4                   (B) SENATE.—In the Senate, a point of  
5                   order properly raised pursuant to paragraph (1)  
6                   shall be waived only by an affirmative vote of  
7                   2/3 of the Members senators duly chosen and  
8                   sworn.

9                   (e) APPLICATION OF CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET  
10 ACT.—To the extent that they are relevant and not incon-  
11 sistent with this Act, the provisions of title III of the Con-  
12 gressional Budget Act of 1974 shall apply in the House  
13 of Representatives and the Senate to any bill or joint reso-  
14 lution, any amendment thereto, and any conference report  
15 thereon that is considered pursuant to this section.

16                   (f) RULES OF SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-  
17 TIVES.—This section is enacted by Congress—

18                   (1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of  
19                   the Senate and the House of Representatives, re-  
20                   spectively, and is deemed to be part of the rules of  
21                   each House, respectively, but applicable only with re-  
22                   spect to the procedure to be followed in that House  
23                   in the case of a bill introduced pursuant to this sec-  
24                   tion, and it supersedes other rules only to the extent  
25                   that it is inconsistent with such rules; and

## 6 SEC. 14. LONG-TERM CBO COST ESTIMATE.

7 (a) PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION.—When the  
8 Commission, the President, or the chairman or ranking  
9 minority member of the Committee on the Budget of ei-  
10 ther House submits a written request to the Director of  
11 the Congressional Budget Office for a long-term CBO cost  
12 estimate of legislation proposed under this Act or an  
13 amendment referred to in section 13(b)(3)(B) or section  
14 13(c)(3)(B), the Director shall prepare the estimate and  
15 have it published in the Congressional Record as expedi-  
16 tiously as possible.

17 (b) CONTENT.—A long-term CBO cost estimate shall  
18 include—

4 (c) FORM.—To the extent that a long-term CBO cost  
5 estimate presented in dollars is impracticable, the Director  
6 of the Congressional Budget Office may instead present  
7 the estimate in terms of percentages of gross domestic  
8 product, with rounding to the nearest 1/10 of 1 percent  
9 of gross domestic product.

10 (d) LIMITATIONS ON DISCRETIONARY SPENDING.—  
11 A long-term CBO cost estimate shall only consider the ef-  
12 fects of provisions affecting revenues and direct spending  
13 (as defined by the Balanced Budget and Emergency Def-  
14 icit Control Act of 1985), and shall not assume that any  
15 changes in outlays will result from limitations on, or re-  
16 ductions in, annual appropriations.

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