

# Trump names hard-line “deficit hawk” to head budget office

Our reporter  
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President-elect Donald Trump has named Republican Representative Mick Mulvaney of South Carolina to be director of the Office of Management Budget, placing a confirmed opponent of Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security in the top fiscal policy-making position in the new administration.

The 49-year-old Mulvaney came to Congress in 2010 as part of the right-wing Tea Party faction promoted by the Koch brothers and other Republican billionaires, taking advantage of popular hostility to the enactment of Obama’s health care legislation. One of his first actions was to oppose the bipartisan budget deal in 2011 between congressional Republicans and Obama. He advocated that the Republicans force the US Treasury to default rather than agree to raising the debt ceiling.

From then on he was active in the most right-wing faction of the House Republicans, the so-called House Freedom Caucus, which supported a shutdown of the federal government in 2013 to force repeal of Obamacare, and later carried out a rebellion that forced out House Speaker John Boehner. He moved closer to the House Republican leadership under Boehner’s successor, Paul Ryan, who hailed his selection as White House budget chief.

In a statement Saturday announcing the appointment, Trump declared, “Right now we are nearly \$20 trillion in debt, but Mick is a very high-energy leader with deep convictions for how to responsibly manage our nation’s finances and save our country from drowning in red ink.”

Mulvaney’s convictions revolve around slashing entitlement programs like Medicare and Social Security, the largest single non-military areas of federal spending. In accepting the nomination, he said the Trump administration “will restore budgetary and fiscal

sanity back in Washington after eight years of an out-of-control, tax and spend financial agenda, and will work with Congress to create policies that will be friendly to American workers and businesses.”

This is political code for cutting federal social spending drastically, to pay for further tax cuts for the wealthy and big business. Trump has pledged to cut the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to only 15 percent, a windfall for the rich that will come out the health care and retirement money of tens of millions of elderly and disabled working people.

Mulvaney endorsed Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky for the Republican presidential nomination, not turning to Trump until Speaker Paul Ryan finally did so in June.

His public comments about entitlement programs are in stark contrast to Trump’s, since the Republican presidential candidate claimed to oppose cuts in Medicare and Social Security. Mulvaney’s nomination is taken as a signal that Trump is scrapping his purported opposition to such cuts and reverting to the traditional Republican position. The *Hill* headlined the Mulvaney selection, “Trump’s pick for budget chief could signal a major shift on Medicare, Social Security.”

Mulvaney is even an opponent of federal disaster relief, traditionally one of the few areas of federal domestic spending to receive bipartisan support. He tried to block the \$50.7 billion emergency relief bill passed early in 2013 for Hurricane Sandy, introducing an amendment requiring that the spending be offset dollar for dollar with across-the-board cuts in other domestic programs.

Some 162 Republican representatives backed the amendment, which was only defeated after opposition from Chris Christie, the Republican governor of New

Jersey, the state hardest hit by the storm.



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