TO: Members of the House Democratic Caucus
FR: DCCC Chairman Steve Israel
DT: April 29, 2014
RE: "Battleground: Middle Class"

At the beginning of April, Republicans rolled out their latest budget – turning their backs on the middle class and stacking the deck for the wealthy – and we promised you that we would fight back hard.

At the DCCC, we immediately launched "Battleground: Middle Class," a paid media and field effort to go on offense against Republicans for these misguided and damaging priorities.

In the first few weeks of the program alone, we went on offense against 100 Republicans in 76 districts – both those who are in office and those who are challenging Democrats – and the results have been tremendous. In districts around the country, constituents protested the Republicans' budget for its destructive effects on the middle class, students and seniors – all to help the already wealthy. Local press outlets around the country continue to hold Republicans' feet to the fire, asking Republican challengers where they stand on this critical test for the midterms.

I'm attaching a memo from DCCC Executive Director Kelly Ward to outline our successes holding Republicans accountable so far. This is only the start; the Republicans' budget is one of the defining issues of the midterm elections because it reveals their true priorities: helping to enrich the already rich at the expense of the middle class.

As always, thank you for your continued support. Your support makes it possible for us to do this work, stay on offense and hold Republicans accountable.

TO: DCCC Chairman Steve Israel
FR: DCCC Executive Director Kelly Ward
DT: April 29, 2014
RE: "Battleground: Middle Class" Holding Republicans Accountable

Paul Ryan and the Republicans launched their latest budget without a splash because they know – like we do – that the single most out-of-touch and politically toxic vote Republicans can take is for a budget that sells out the middle class for their special interests. Republicans hoped their budget vote would go down as quietly and quickly as possible – no fanfare, no press conferences, no glitzy web videos, no comments.

They were wrong. Before the final vote on the budget was even held, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee launched our sweeping offense campaign, "Battleground: Middle Class," a paid media and field effort against 100 Republican incumbents and candidates across the country.

I'm happy to report that "Battleground: Middle Class" is already a success. When Republicans who voted for this wrong-headed budget went home, their constituents held rallies, protests and demonstrations outside their offices to condemn them for selling out middle class families.

The public anger and frustration with this budget is clear. In fact, in 17 polls in competitive Congressional districts since the beginning of the year, we've seen attacks on the Republican budget as one of the strongest arguments against the Republican in the race.

Over recess, the DCCC engaged in an aggressive and intentional effort to draw Republican challengers out of hiding and get them on the record to tell the voting public how they would vote.

As a result, we now have strong ammunition that we will deploy against Republican challengers and incumbents throughout the fall. **A dozen Republicans who are challenging our Frontline Democrats responded directly to DCCC efforts – and they are now on the record supporting the Republican budget that sells out the middle class**.

Case Study: FL-26 Carlos Curbelo

In Miami, Carlos Curbelo is running against Representative Joe Garcia, and had hidden his position from the public until the Miami Herald asked him about the DCCC's "Battleground: Middle Class" project. It resulted in this quote from Curbelo:

"While I have not fully reviewed this budget I'm inclined to support it." [Miami Herald, 4/2/14]

- Headline: DCCC puts Carlos Curbelo on defense over Ryan budget

Curbelo's example was replicated across the country, as challengers who continued to try to evade questions about their positions received hard copies of the budget from the DCCC and primers about its contents.

Republican Incumbents Under Pressure

With Republican challengers now on the record about their party's devastating budget, Republican incumbents are also under pressure for voting to sell out the middle class in favor of special interests. Local coverage across the country has been excruciating:

- California's KERO-BFL ABC: "The group from the Kern County Democratic Party called out representative Valadao for voting to pass a bill in the house that would dismiss immigration reform efforts and would increase taxes for the middle class by almost two thousand dollars – all the while creating tax breaks for the wealthiest." [4/16/14]

- Michigan's ABC 10: "A group of concerned citizens gathered outside the Marquette office of Congressman Dan Benishek today to voice their opinion on the budget. Among their chief concerns were changes it will introduce to Medicare and college aid programs such as Pell Grants and student loans." [4/15/14]

- Philadelphia Enquirer: "Democrats argue that the cuts will hammer the middle class by slashing college aid, Medicaid, and food aid for the needy, and turning Medicare into a voucherlike system while giving tax breaks to the wealthy." [4/12/14]

- Turlock (Calif) City News: "Race Heats Up as Eggman Says Denham 'Sells Out' With Budget Vote" [4/11/14]

- Twinsburg (Ohio) Bulletin: "Congressional Hopeful Michael Wager Appears At Twinsburg Office to Oppose David Joyce, 'Reckless' Budget" [4/10/14]

- Time Warner Cable: "[NY-23 candidate Martha] Robertson calls it the 'Ryan-Reed budget' and she says it will cut Medicare into a voucher program and cut taxes for millionaires. Robertson says it would be devastating to senior citizens and middle class families." [4/10/14]

Democratic candidates themselves are also keeping incumbent Republicans' feet to the fire, with statements zeroing in on the budget's impact on the middle class. A sampling of their efforts is below:

- Amanda Renteria, (CA-21): "David Valadao's vote on the Republican budget shows that he is out of touch with the Central Valley. This budget hurts education, it does not address immigration reform, and it harms our seniors."

- Gwen Graham, (FL-02): "Police officers don't serve in North Florida for the money or to wear a uniform, they do so because they believe in public service," Graham said. "While they risk their lives every day serving our communities, Congressman Steve Southerland is safe in the Capitol, where he's obviously forgotten whom he serves.
  Today, Southerland turned his back on the very police officers who protect our families."

- Staci Appel, (IA-03): "Iowa's middle class families deserve to know where my Republican opponents stand on today's passage of the Ryan Budget. The Ryan Budget stacks the deck for special interests and big corporations who ship our jobs overseas, while breaking the promise of Medicare to our seniors, increasing the cost of college loans to students and raising taxes on middle class Iowans."

- Ann Callis, (IL-13): "This budget ends the Medicare guarantee, cuts Pell Grants, and keeps incentives for companies to ship jobs overseas. Instead of playing political games, I will go to Congress and bring people together to get results like raising the minimum wage, renewing long-term unemployment benefits and passing the Paycheck Fairness Act to ensure women receive equal pay for equal work."

- Joe Bock, (IN-02): "Congresswoman Walorski has done irreparable damage to Hoosier seniors and the middle class today. She voted to raise Medicare costs and cut taxes for millionaires."

- Kelly Kultala, (KS-03): "Kansans want Washington to focus on helping businesses create jobs, but this latest budget is a slap in the face that would reward those who ship jobs overseas, jeopardize Medicare for seniors, and hurt middle class families while wasting our tax dollars on handouts to the special interests and the ultra-wealthy."

- Elisabeth Jensen, (KY-06): "It should surprise no one that today Andy Barr once again supported a reckless budget that throws middle income Americans and Seniors under the bus. Andy Barr's budget is a slap in the face that would actually would end the Medicare guarantee, turn it into a voucher program, reopen the prescription drug donut hole and make seniors pay more for health care – while lining the pockets of their special interest donors. Kentuckians deserve someone who will fight for their jobs, cut spending the right way and reduce our deficit – but not on the backs of seniors and the middle class."

- Emily Cain, (ME-02): "It's time for Republicans in Congress to stop selling out the middle class," said Cain. "This proposal would be laughable if it were not reality. It's another example of polarizing politics in Washington, without focusing on the senior

citizens and working families who are struggling to make ends meet. There are solutions to the federal budget problems, but taking money and services away from the people who need it the most while ensuring the rich get richer is not the way to solve anything."

- Jerry Cannon Campaign, (MI-01): "Today Congressman Benishek showed that he cares more about the special interests and the wealthy than Northern Michigan by voting for a budget that would end the guarantee of Medicare and raise costs for our seniors," said Ted Dick. "It's shameful that Congressman Benishek voted today to raise taxes on the middle class while cutting taxes for millionaires like himself."

- Pam Byrnes, (MI-07): "Congressman Walberg has again sold out Michigan's middle class families by voting for a budget that would end Medicare's guaranteed benefit and raise taxes on the middle class in order to pay for more tax breaks for big corporations and the ultra wealthy."

- Bill Hughes, (NJ-02): "With some of the nation's highest unemployment, we need to start talking about strengthening our regional economy and creating jobs. Instead of delivering on his faded promise to bring high-paying jobs through the NexGen program, Congressman LoBiondo's House Republican budget attacks our most vulnerable; our seniors, students, and working and middle class families."

- Aimee Belgard, (NJ-03): "Congress outlined their priorities for the future of our country today. They propose raising taxes on middle-class families, turning Medicare into a voucher program and raising seniors' out of pocket prescription drug costs, all while preserving tax loopholes for corporations that ship jobs overseas. Enough is enough."

- Rocky Lara, (NM-02): "At every juncture Congressman Pearce's budget protects special interests while imposing harsh costs and increased tax burdens on southern New Mexico's middle class families and seniors," said Rocky Lara. "Congressman Pearce's vote shows that he, like this budget, represents all the wrong priorities for southern New Mexico."

- Sean Eldridge, (NY-19): "In 2011, Chris Gibson stood in the halls of Congress and voted for the Ryan Budget that would gut Medicare and force a tax hike on the middle class. Now, in an Election Year, he's changed his tune, claiming to advocate for the same working families whose interests he voted against in the past, and he continues to support the Cooper-LaTourette budget that would harm families in our region."

- Erin Bilbray, (NV-03): "Joe Heck's budget gives breaks to out of state multi-millionaires and corporations while increasing taxes on Nevada's middle class. Seniors will see their Medicare costs go up and the average middle class families will see their taxes increase by $2,000 every year. Joe Heck's values are out of sync with southern Nevada."

- Michael Wager, (OH-14): "Joyce's budget will voucherize Medicare and re-open the part D doughnut hole, costing Ohio's seniors an average of $1,200 more per year in prescription drug costs."

- Suzanne Patrick, (VA-02): "I am saddened to see that the House today passed a budget that hurts middle class families in order to provide tax breaks for the wealthy. Congressman Rigell sided with the extreme Tea Party leadership in the House to pass a budget that would end Medicare as we know it, kill job growth, and raise taxes by $2,000 for the average middle class family. This is a matter of priorities, and Congressman Rigell and his Tea Party friends chose special interests over hard-working Hampton Roads families."

And at protests around the country, voters voiced their anger over the budget. A sampling of the protests can be seen below:

AZ-02 Ryan Budget "Don't Sell Us Out" Rally (April 11)

CO-06 "Stop Selling Us Out" Rally in Aurora (April 24)

IA-03 Ryan Budget Roundtable (April 24)

IL-13 Ryan Budget "Stop Us Selling Out" Students Rally in Champaign (April 11)

MI-01 Ryan Budget "Protect Our Airports" Event in Alpena (April 10)

NY-24 "Don't Sell Us Out" Protest (April 9)

WV-03 "West Virginia Is Not For Sale" Ryan Budget Event (April 24)

Clearly, for millions of Americans, the Republican budget isn't old news – it's a blueprint for squeezing them even harder. And every day from now until November, Democratic Members, challengers and the DCCC will continue to make sure that voters know who has their backs.