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ARTICLE

America's Fiscal Time Bomb Is Ticking-And It's Set to Explode In Your Lifetime





BY PNW STAFF FEBRUARY 18, 2026

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The latest long-term budget outlook from the Congressional Budget Office should have triggered emergency hearings, prime-time presidential addresses, and wall-to-wall media coverage. Instead, it landed with a dull thud. No urgency. No alarm. No real action. Yet buried inside that report is a blunt mathematical truth: the United States is speeding toward a debt crisis that will not be theoretical, political, or abstract. It will be personal. And when it arrives, it will reach straight into your wallet, your retirement, your job, and your family's future.

This year alone, the federal government is expected to spend \$7.4 trillion while collecting just \$5.6 trillion. That's a \$1.8 trillion deficit added to the national credit card in a single year. According to projections, deficits will surpass \$3 trillion annually by the mid-2030s, with a staggering \$24.4 trillion added to the debt over the next decade. That number is so large it almost stops feeling real. But make no mistake: it is real. And someone will pay it.

Height

5'0" 5'1" 5'2" 5'3" 5'4"

Weight

190 lbs 200 lbs 210 lbs

Goal Weight

108 lbs 136 lbs 144 lbs

Age

45 50

CALCULATE

TAI CHI WALKING TO LOSE 45 LBS ACCORDING TO MY AGE?

Here's the part most Americans don't realize. The biggest threat isn't military spending, foreign aid, or government salaries. The real driver of future debt is built into the system itself. Mandatory spending programs that run on autopilot will consume nearly \$50 trillion over the next ten years. Add income-security programs, veterans' benefits, and federal retirement obligations, and you're looking at another \$8 trillion. That averages nearly \$6 trillion every year before Congress even votes on a single new policy.

Even more alarming: interest payments on the national debt are exploding. They already exceed military spending today. Within a decade, interest alone is projected to cost as much as all discretionary spending combined--every soldier, every park ranger, every air traffic

controller, every federal
That's not a budget. T

re living expenses.

Some lawmakers argue that cutting government workers will fix the problem. But even after roughly 270,000 federal employees were reduced, deficits barely budged. Why? Because payroll isn't the main driver. The structural imbalance is baked into the system. You could eliminate all discretionary spending tomorrow--shut down agencies, close parks, halt defense--and the government would still run a massive deficit.

Let that sink in. Even extreme cuts wouldn't balance the books.



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What makes this situation especially dangerous is that official projections rely on rosy assumptions. Inflation, for example, is expected to settle around 2 percent for most of the next decade. But the math behind the debt suggests the opposite. If the government must borrow \$24 trillion, someone has to lend it. Foreign buyers are already stepping back from U.S. Treasuries, diversifying reserves into other assets. Domestic savings aren't large enough to fill the gap. That leaves one primary buyer: the Federal Reserve.

When the central bank buys government debt, it effectively creates new money. We saw what happened the last time trillions were created quickly--prices surged, savings lost value, and everyday Americans paid more for food, housing, and fuel. If future borrowing requires even larger money creation, inflation won't just tick up. It could surge again, quietly eroding purchasing power year after year.

And this is where it becomes personal.

If you're young, this crisis threatens your future wages, job opportunities, and ability to build wealth. If you're middle-aged, it jeopardizes your retirement timeline and the value of your savings. If you're retired, it risks the purchasing power of fixed income and benefits. Inflation is not just an economic statistic--it is a silent tax that punishes savers, workers, and families living on budgets.

History is clear about what happens when governments ignore debt arithmetic. Nations don't collapse overnight. They drift. They inflate. They stagnate. Then suddenly, borrowing becomes expensive, confidence falters, and crisis arrives faster than anyone expected.



What is most unsettling
addressed early. They

table when
ndow is closing.

The warning signs are flashing. The math is published. The trajectory is clear.

The only remaining question is whether Americans will demand action before the bill comes due or whether we will wait until the markets, the currency, and reality force it upon us.

Because one way or another, that bill is coming.

And when it does, it won't arrive in Washington first.

It will arrive in your life.

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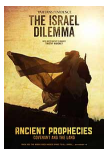
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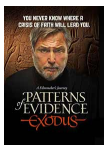
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