Under Governor Maggie Hassan’s leadership, New Hampshire has enacted two fiscally responsible, balanced budgets that protect critical economic priorities while holding the line against an income or sales tax. The Governor has improved efficiency and innovation in state government and taken steps to save taxpayers money. The Governor’s careful management of the state budget – coupled with a strengthening economy – helped ensure a $62-million-dollar budget last fiscal year, with this year’s surplus expected to be even greater. New Hampshire’s Rainy Day Fund, which has more than doubled under Governor Hassan’s leadership, is now on track to be filled by the end of the biennium for the first time in recent history. And Governor Hassan led by example, cutting her salary below her predecessor’s when she entered office and refusing pay increases throughout her time in office.

Governor Hassan will bring this same Granite State focus on fiscal responsibility with her to the U.S. Senate. She believes that we must take steps now to get the nation’s fiscal house in order, cut the deficit, reduce the national debt and support priorities that promote economic growth.

Fiscal responsibility has fallen by the wayside as Washington has given in to corporate special interests that have rigged the system for themselves and against the middle class. Governor Hassan strongly opposes efforts pushed by special interests to balance the budget on the backs of hard-working Granite State families and seniors. In the Senate, she will stand up to measures such as the reckless budgets put forth by Republican Speaker of the House Paul Ryan that threaten funding for priorities such as Pell Grants and substance abuse treatment while giving tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires. And she will fight against those who seek to turn Medicare into a voucher program, cut Social Security or raise the retirement age.

Instead of senseless across-the-board cuts, the Governor will focus on restoring fiscal order in a responsible way. Republicans, Democrats and independents agree that the best way to cut the deficit and improve the country’s fiscal health is to grow the economy. In June, Governor Hassan released her [Innovate NH 2.0](http://www.innovatenh20.com) economic plan, a roadmap for fostering innovation, supporting job-creating businesses and expanding opportunity for hard-working families. The Governor’s plan to spark inclusive economic growth will allow all Granite Staters the opportunity to work their way to a middle class life – and improve the federal government’s fiscal outlook.
But growth alone won’t be enough, and the Governor will also bring to the Senate the principles and ideas that have guided her fiscally responsible approach in New Hampshire. In the Senate, Governor Hassan will focus on: (1) enacting common-sense reforms to the budget process, (2) cutting wasteful spending, (3) making smart, data-driven decisions, (4) strengthening Social Security and Medicare, and (5) supporting priorities that promote economic growth.

As Senator, Governor Hassan will roll up her sleeves and take the same approach that’s working in New Hampshire – reaching across party lines to get results. Together, she knows that we can cut the deficit, address the national debt, take on corporate special interests and restore fiscal responsibility to the federal budget.
1. Reform the Budget Process

Making fiscally responsible decisions starts with a sound budget process. When she took office, Governor Maggie Hassan immediately worked to reform the state budget process, creating a Consensus Revenue Estimating Panel to help develop and update responsible revenue estimates and to provide advice and information to the Governor and Legislature throughout the budget cycle. She insisted that agencies live within the state’s means, requesting proposals that cut spending as she crafted her budget plan, and she fought back against dishonest tactics like back of the budget cuts that mislead the public about what services are truly funded. In 2014, the Governor signed a law that requires state agencies to clearly lay out their goals and missions and use data to show how they are spending on those goals.

Governor Hassan also worked across party lines to settle lawsuits that jeopardized New Hampshire’s financial future and bond rating, reaching agreements that helped Granite Staters get the services they need while protecting the state’s bottom line.

The Governor is similarly committed to ensuring an efficient and effective federal budget process. That starts with passing Senator Shaheen’s Biennial Budgeting and Appropriations Act to move Congress to a two-year budget cycle – like we have in New Hampshire – instead of the broken annual process in Washington. This bipartisan proposal is a common-sense reform that would allow Congress to focus on appropriations legislation during the first half of each two-year congressional term before turning to oversight of existing programs and authorization of future initiatives in the second year.

Governor Hassan also supports returning to a more orderly appropriations process. Too often Congress has failed to do its job of passing a budget resolution, considering separate appropriations bills instead of a consolidated omnibus bill and finishing the budget on-time. Despite promises to prioritize a return to this so-called “regular order,” the Republican-led Congress has thus far proven incapable of working in an orderly manner to move forward with the normal process. The Governor was also disturbed to watch Republicans in Congress play political games with critical federal programs over the past few years, such as shutting down the government in 2013 and threatening to close the Department of Homeland Security again in 2015 over partisan disputes. During the 2013 government shutdown, intelligence agencies were forced to furlough 70 percent of civilian personnel, a move the Director of National Intelligence said “seriously damages our ability to protect the safety and security of this nation.” And New Hampshire’s economy was directly impacted, with workers going unpaid and the White Mountain National Forest suspending key services and closing important facilities during peak fall tourism season.

In the Senate, Governor Hassan will push for a return to the regular order of the budget process and will fight to keep the federal government open, ensuring that politics does not interfere with our national security or economy. And to help get Congress working again, she’ll support No Budget, No Pay legislation that would stop members of Congress from getting paid unless they pass a budget resolution and regular appropriations bills by the relevant deadlines.
2. Cut Wasteful Spending

Governor Maggie Hassan has worked throughout her time in office to cut wasteful state spending – efforts that have helped balance New Hampshire's budget without a sales or income tax. The Governor has taken steps to reduce duplication and improve government efficiency, creating the Office of Professional Licensure and Certification to merge 28 boards and commissions into one office. She consolidated and eliminated duplicative reports by state agencies. She expanded electronic filing and communications within state agencies, saving on printing and postage and making it easier for businesses and individuals to file taxes electronically and making the state more consumer friendly. She pushed for transparency in state government and issued an executive order directing state agencies to regularly report on progress implementing recommendations of audits. And in the face of a revenue shortfall during her first term, Governor Hassan took preemptive action to freeze hiring and spending – efforts that helped state government finish the budget cycle with a surplus.

Governor Hassan will bring the same focus on efficiency with her to the Senate by pushing to eliminate wasteful spending from the federal budget, starting by eliminating and consolidating duplicative and overlapping programs. One study found that the federal government has 20 programs across 12 agencies devoted to studying invasive species. While a laudable goal, Congress does a disservice by creating numerous pet programs and failing to properly consolidate or oversee their efforts, resulting in overlapping programs and inefficient and wasteful spending. Instead of continuing this patchwork approach, Congress must get serious about paring down these efforts and reinvesting the savings in deficit reduction and proven programs.

The Governor will also work to reduce or eliminate funding for problematic or ineffective efforts such as tobacco subsidies and abstinence-only education, saving taxpayers billions of dollars over the coming decade. She will push the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to jointly procure prescription drugs, potentially saving billions over the next 10 years. And Governor Hassan will work to ensure that Congress makes better use of its oversight authority to crack down on waste, fraud and abuse in government spending to free up resources for critical priorities. Examples of wasteful spending such as $43 million spent on a gas station in Afghanistan or $150 million spent on private villas for contractors show the importance of having strong oversight and auditing functions. Congress must do its job to ensure that the federal government is spending wisely and promptly addressing issues when they come to light.

And the federal government itself must learn to operate more efficiently going forward. Just as she did in New Hampshire, Governor Hassan will push federal agencies to move into the 21st Century when it comes to publishing, communications and travel – reducing printing costs and travel spending through electronic publication and teleconferencing. The government can also save billions by selling thousands of unused federal buildings across the country, and the Governor will support loosening the regulations that prevent agencies from selling these unused properties.
Governor Hassan also voluntarily reduced her own salary when she took office in 2013 and has declined pay increases since then, and she supports maintaining the pay freeze for members of Congress to ensure that they don’t get a pay raise until hard-working middle class families see real wage growth.

3. Make Data-Driven Decisions

Over the past few years, a heightened focus on metrics and data have helped drive change in fields as disparate as manufacturing, social media and public health. But while the private and non-profit sectors have embraced these data-driven approaches, government has too often missed the boat. As Governor, Maggie Hassan has worked to reverse this trend by ensuring that data and analysis drive decision-making. For example, she launched an effort to create a unified database of geographically-based natural hazard data, which will enable the state to analyze past naturally caused damages and facilitate risk reduction by prioritizing hazard mitigation investments and projects.

Governor Hassan will take the same data-driven approach in Washington. Congress cannot simply continue to pour money into programs that fail to produce results, and should instead focus resources on efforts with a proven track record of success. The Governor will work to invest a higher proportion of federal spending in programs that get real results while revamping or eliminating unproven or failed efforts.

Yet too often, Congress lacks the basic information to help make these data-driven decisions. By one estimate, less than $1 of out $100 spent by the federal government is backed by evidence that the money is being spent wisely. This lack of information costs real money, and economists have estimated that focusing more on program evaluation could save tens of billions of dollars by learning what works and improving programs that don’t. Governor Hassan supports initiatives to devote a portion of spending on federal programs to tracking results and conducting analysis to determine which programs are meeting their goals.

4. Strengthen Social Security & Medicare

New Hampshire’s seniors deserve a high quality of life with access to the full benefits they have paid into and earned during their careers. But corporate special interests have targeted Social Security and Medicare, trying to turn taxpayer dollars into profits for Wall Street and insurance companies. Governor Maggie Hassan is a strong supporter of both Social Security and Medicare and believes that we must strengthen and protect these programs for years to come – and she won’t let special interest prey on seniors’ hard-earned benefits. In the Senate, she will fight attempts to privatize or cut Social Security or raise the retirement age, and she will stand up to those trying to turn Medicare into a voucher program.

The Governor will also ensure that we are protecting Social Security and Medicare for future generations. She believes we should ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more into the Social Security system to shore up the program’s finances while protecting middle class families. Governor Hassan will also work to allow Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices, which could save tens of billions of dollars per year.

Fiscal Responsibility
She also supports Accountable Care Organizations that value quality over quantity to help ensure that Medicare dollars are spent wisely.

And she will take steps to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse in both programs. A 2015 report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that Medicare alone made $60 billion in improper payments in Fiscal Year 2014. The Governor will push to reduce this wasteful spending by implementing GAO’s recommendations to improve the claims processing system, strengthen the post-payment claims reviewing process and enhance upfront verification of providers and suppliers.

Together these steps will ensure that these essential programs are fiscally sound for generations to come while reducing long-term deficits and future debt.

5. Support Priorities that Promote Economic Growth

The best way to balance the budget and reduce the national debt is to grow America’s economy. As Governor, Maggie Hassan has focused on supporting the priorities that drive innovative economic growth: affordable higher education, cutting taxes for small businesses and research and development, expanding access to health care, and fixing our highways, roads and bridges while holding the line against an income or sales tax. New Hampshire has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, led New England in economic growth for the first quarter of 2016 and was recently ranked the most business friendly state in the nation by CNBC.

New Hampshire’s strong economy, coupled with Governor Hassan’s fiscally responsible approach to budgeting – without a sales or income tax – has helped the state double its Rainy Day fund to its highest level in years while consistently producing budget surpluses.

Governor Hassan’s fiscally responsible budgets have protected funding for critical priorities – and Washington needs to take the same approach. The Governor’s Innovate NH 2.0 economic plan builds on progress in New Hampshire and provides a federal roadmap for fostering innovation, supporting job-creating businesses and expanding opportunity for hard-working families. Her Innovate NH 2.0 plan includes tax cuts for families and small businesses while promoting education and fixing our highways, roads and bridges.

And Governor Hassan laid out how to pay for her fiscally responsible economic plan by standing up to special interests. She calls for eliminating special tax breaks for Wall Street and Big Oil, ending tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas, asking millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share, and holding accountable corporations and wealthy individuals who aren’t paying their taxes. Together, these efforts can help ensure that we can grow New Hampshire’s and America’s economy without adding to the deficit or pushing more debt onto the next generation.
As Governor of New Hampshire, Maggie Hassan has prioritized responsible budgeting and efficient government. She will maintain that same focus on fiscal responsibility as New Hampshire’s next U.S. Senator to cut the deficit and reduce the national debt while supporting priorities that promote economic growth.

For too long, corporate special interests have stacked the deck in Washington in their favor and against both fiscal responsibility and the middle class. Governor Hassan will stand up to these special interests to get the United States’ fiscal house in order.

Washington has a lot to learn from the Granite State’s approach to fiscal responsibility. By reaching across party lines to deliver results, we can support priorities such as higher education and retirement security while restoring fiscal responsibility to the federal government.

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For more information about what Maggie’s priorities will be in the U.S. Senate, visit: www.maggiehassan.com/priorities