

# Speaker Ryan: Makes remarks at the National Press Club

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**CONTACT**  
[AshLee Strong](#), [Doug Andres](#)  
202-225-0600

**WASHINGTON**—Today, in a speech at the National Press Club, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) discussed how Americans are “Better Off Now,” highlighting the positive results delivered by Republican policies in contrast to the Democrats’ vision for America. Below are Speaker Ryan’s full remarks, as prepared for delivery:

*“Thank you, Andrea. It is great to be here this afternoon at the National Press Club.*

*“One of the most valuable things we have in a democracy is the spirited exchange of ideas.*

*“By celebrating the First Amendment, this organization plays a vital role in fostering civic dialogue—here and around the world.*

*“Ideas are what drew me to this line of work.*

*“I love taking an idea, putting it to paper, going through debate, tweaking and improving it, seeing it come to fruition—and most important of all—watching it improve people’s lives.*

*“As we now enter the height of a political season, it is a good time to step back from the noise and reflect on where we are.*

*“Two years ago, we faced a daunting challenge. Our nation was on the wrong path.*

*“Our economy was still muddling through the worst recovery since the Great Depression. Our military was in the throes of a severe readiness crisis. Big challenges were going unmet.*

*“So we as House Republicans offered the country a better way, an optimistic, detailed policy agenda.*

*“And, we have delivered on that agenda.*

*“Today, our country is turning the corner. American families are better off now.*

*“The economy is growing. At more than twice the rate two years ago.*

*“Wages and benefits are up, growing at their fastest rate in 10 years.*

*“Job openings are at a record high. Consumer confidence is near a record high.*

*“Productivity. Manufacturing. Retail sales. Home sales. All of these things are up.*

*“And, the nation’s unemployment rate has just dropped to a 49-year low.*

*“But there is more.*

*“Through tax reform alone, nine out of 10 workers will see more take home pay. At least six million workers have received raises, bonuses, and better benefits. And people in at least 49 states are seeing lower utility bills.*

*“Overall, 57 percent of Americans say things are going well in the country today.*

*“This is great progress, but we did not set out just to clean up the mess.*

*“We set out to build up the country’s resilience...to restore that sense of aspiration and opportunity that sets Americans apart. That is how we have delivered on big things.*

*“We did not just cut taxes. We went from having one of the most burdensome tax codes in the industrialized world to one of the most competitive.*

*“Through new opportunity zones, distressed areas will be able to draw in new investment for years, if not decades. With that investment comes revitalization and transformation for these communities.*

*“With an overhauled career and technical education system, it will be easier for students and workers to build their skills and find good jobs.*

*“We did not just undo military cuts. We wanted to equip our armed forces with the resources they needed to address a devastating readiness crisis. We moved from aging equipment and undertrained troops to a historic defense buildup.*

*“We recently gave the Pentagon a full year of higher military funding, on time for the first time in 10 years. And it comes with the biggest pay raise for our troops in nine years.*

*“Secretary Mattis is getting what he needs to build a more agile, lethal 21st-century fighting force.*

*“We did not just roll back red tape. We went from an administration that kept our resources under lock and key to putting America on a path to being a net energy exporter in the next five years. America is now the world’s leading oil producer too.*

*“All of these are great turnaround stories.*

*“We have also taken on the challenges that hit closest to home.*

*“Take human trafficking, one of the world’s fastest-growing crimes. This spring, Congress passed a law cracking down on websites that make it far, far too easy to sell women and children with impunity.*

*“Already, we are seeing results. Between April and July, there was a 62 percent reduction in advertising of this kind in North America.*

*“Websites are shutting down, posting fewer ads and attracting fewer buyers. This is a solid step in the right direction.*

*“We started implementing real reforms to the VA system, where not too long ago, patients—our veterans, our heroes—were dying while bureaucrats dithered. It was just sickening.*

*“So this Congress has passed landmark reforms to hold VA officials accountable. We have improved community care programs and modernized the appeals process, so veterans will get better care when they need it.*

*“And we have delivered a major expansion of the GI Bill. Veterans can now use their education benefits whenever they choose—no time limits.*

*“Here, too, there are signs of progress. The VA recently announced it has surpassed its goals for the year on delivering appeals decisions for disability claims. We have a long way to go, but we are on the right track.*

*“We have acted to make our schools safer, and we have stepped up the fight against MS-13, expanding resources for local law enforcement to curb gang activity.*

*“And Congress has just sent to the president’s desk legislation to address the tide of opioid addiction.*

*“This epidemic affects all of our communities, claiming the lives of roughly 115 people each day.*

*“But this is not just about the numbers, as staggering as they are. It is likely you know someone or a family going through this. So you know how it is leeching the life out of so many people.*

*“With this legislation, we are taking on the illicit and synthetic drugs making their way across our borders. We are expanding and creating new recovery centers, and improving access to treatment, putting our resources in the communities on the front lines.*

*“There is more work to do, but this is the most significant congressional effort in history to fight a single drug crisis. And, we hope, it will save lives.*

*“These are all big things we have delivered, big promises we have kept. And if you want to learn more about our record, I encourage you to visit [better.gop](http://better.gop).*

*“This is the better way we offered the country two years ago: going bold, staying focused on the things people actually care about, pursuing policies that will improve people’s lives.*

*“I know this approach seems fairly obvious, but it becomes more evident by the day that Democrats don’t see things this way.*

*“They have made it clear: their only response to the noise in Washington is more disorder, more chaos. Outrage has become their standard operating procedure.*

*“Instead of offering an alternative during the debate over tax reform, they said it would lead to ‘Armageddon.’*

*“Instead of welcoming or even acknowledging the benefits of tax reform, they dismissed it all as ‘crumbs.’*

*“We want to make tax cuts for individuals and families permanent. They want to repeal tax reform—and raise taxes on hardworking Americans.*

*“How much? That’s the thing, they won’t say. You have to wonder how that uncertainty feels for a family counting on an expanded child tax credit, or a small business finally getting some real relief.*

*“While we have worked to secure our borders, Democrats actually want to abolish the agency responsible for enforcing our laws and keeping us safe.*

*“And while we have worked to lower health care costs, Democrats propose to abolish our health care system as we know it. And it is the best representation of how far today’s Democratic Party has gone off the rails.*

*“Now Democrats call it ‘Medicare for All,’ because it sounds good, but in reality, it actually ends Medicare in its current form.*

*“It ends private insurance altogether, including for the roughly 180 million Americans who count on coverage through their employer.*

*“Everyone—no matter how much you like your plan—would have their plan taken away.*

*“Instead, you will be put into a government-run plan where you will have no say in the cost or the coverage.*

*“Obamacare meant fewer choices. ‘Medicare for All’ means no choices, no competition.*

*“How much do you get charged for this?*

*“A nonpartisan study found that single-payer would cost the government a whopping \$32.6 trillion over 10 years.*

*“Just to put that in perspective, we could double all federal taxes—yours, mine, families, businesses, everyone’s—and still not be able to pay for this.*

*“The only way to control costs would be to ration care, and restrict access to doctors and treatments. All of these decisions would be made in Washington.*

*“Even after the failures of Obamacare, this is the direction the Left wants to take our country.*

*“Taxpayers paying more to get less. Fewer choices, if any choices at all. Poorer quality of care. All while having the government control this huge part of our lives.*

*“A single-payer system is a singularly bad idea.*

*“It all brings to mind what Margaret Thatcher once described as the problem with socialism: ‘Eventually, you run out of other people’s money.’*

*“And it just shows how today’s Democratic Party has gone further left to the fringes, and further back to discredited ideas.*

*“We don’t do these jobs to be fashionable, or to be popular. No one understands that better than me.*

*“We do this to improve people’s lives. We do it by thinking about the long haul—not by making false promises, and pedaling shortcuts that are only dead ends.*

*“We don’t just try to clean up the mess, we set out to build something better.*

*“So we have planted the pillars of a confident America.*

*“An economy on the move again. The best military in the world. Workers back on the path of life, communities back on the rise.*

*“Improving people’s lives. That’s what it comes back to for me. That’s what it has always been about for me.*

*“Thank you for being here. I look forward to taking your questions.”*