

## **DRAFT Message Guidance – GOP’s Pivot to “Welfare Reform”**

- President Trump and Congressional Republicans just rammed through a deeply corrupt tax scam to enrich themselves and their donors, while raising *taxes on millions of Americans* -- all without a single hearing.
  - *ALT OPTION: President Trump and congressional Republicans just enacted a deeply unpopular and harmful tax bill that gives huge tax cuts to the wealthy and large corporations while raising taxes on millions of lower- and middle- income families.*
- President Trump, Speaker Ryan, and other House Republicans didn’t even wait until the tax bill passed before admitting how they plan to pay for their tax cuts for millionaires, billionaires, and big corporations – by slashing health care, nutrition assistance, and other basic supports that help everyday Americans make ends meet.
- President Trump and Speaker Ryan have even indicated that they want to try again to repeal the Affordable Care Act, despite the public’s clear opposition.
- But, this Robin Hood-in-reverse agenda is the opposite of what the American people want. In fact, the debate over the repeal of the Affordable Care Act showed how unpopular cutting Medicaid is. That’s why the Trump Administration, Speaker Ryan and others who support this agenda are trying to disguise harmful cuts as “welfare reform.”
- But don’t be fooled. When they say “welfare reform,” that’s just code for big cuts to health coverage, nutrition assistance, and other basic supports that help everyday families make ends meet and get ahead. Their plan won’t create jobs or raise anyone’s wages – it will just make it harder for struggling families to get back on their feet.
- Calling these programs “welfare” – and calling cuts “reform” – is just a carefully calculated strategy to reinforce myths about who these programs help, instead of being honest that it’s most of us at some point in our lives – when wages aren’t enough, when we lose a job or can’t get enough hours at work, or need to care for an ill loved one.
- In reality, the programs likely to be in the cross hairs are there for all of us when we fall on hard times. Fully 70 percent of Americans will turn to a means-tested assistance program to

make ends meet at some point during their lives. We've put this system in place to protect us against the inevitable ups and downs of life, and we're not going to let them dismantle it to pay for tax breaks for their millionaire buddies.

- If policymakers really wanted to see fewer people needing to turn to public programs to make ends meet, they'd embrace raising the poverty-level minimum wage, which has remained stuck at \$7.25/hour since 2009. A minimum wage worker in 2016 had to clock an extra 244 hours just to earn the same amount in real terms as she did the last time the minimum wage was raised in 2009. And they'd invest in job training, help paying for childcare, and other policies that help people earn more, gain skills, and afford a safe place for their kids while they're at work.
- But slashing critical programs has nothing to do with helping the "forgotten man or woman." Nor is it about addressing the deficit Republicans claim to hate, but which they're currently jacking up by \$1.5 trillion to give huge tax cuts to billionaires and wealthy corporations. It's all a quest to funnel money upwards to themselves and their donor class—while setting fire to any program or policy that help average Americans make ends meet.
  - *ALT OPTION: Slashing critical programs has nothing to do with helping the "forgotten man or woman." Nor is it about reducing the deficit they claim to hate, but which they're increasing by \$1.5 trillion to give huge tax cuts to billionaires and wealthy corporations. Their agenda is simply to get more money to those at the very top, while paying for those tax cuts by cutting health care, food assistance, and other programs that help everyday Americans make ends meet.*
- But we're not going to let them get away with it. Tell Congress **Hands Off** Medicaid, Medicare, nutrition assistance, and other essential programs to pay for tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations.
- Join the fight at [HandsOff.org](http://HandsOff.org) – where you can share your story of what cuts to critical programs would mean for you and your family.