
Senate Republicans Can Still Abandon Disastrous, Rushed Reconciliation Bill

Statement of Sharon Parrott, CBPP President, on Senate Republican reconciliation bill and expected floor vote

The Senate is barreling toward a vote on a *still-not-finished* bill that would take away health coverage and food assistance from millions of people who need it, raise families' costs, and make a large share of people in our nation worse off — all in service to tax cuts that are heavily skewed toward the wealthy and corporations. But there is still time for senators to say no to this bill.

Senate Republican leaders are tinkering with the bill to try to secure votes, but their changes won't alter the bottom line: this bill would cause serious harm. It would increase poverty, hunger, and preventable deaths. This agenda would cause about 16 million more people to be uninsured and make health care unaffordable for millions more.

The bill's proponents tout their tax package. But the tax package extends and even increases tax cuts for millionaires, billionaires, and wealthy heirs, while leaving out the one expiring tax cut that helps roughly 22 million people with low and middle incomes afford health care.

None of this harm has anything to do with fiscal responsibility: our deficits and debts would soar under this bill. If enacted it will stand alone in history — a reconciliation bill that drives up poverty and the number of people uninsured, while *increasing deficits and debt*.

And, given that they are still writing the bill, Senate Republicans don't even know what it costs, though its price tag is surely trillions of dollars, as Congressional Budget Office estimates of earlier drafts made clear.

Still, the President and Senate Republican leaders are pressing toward an immediate vote on the bill even as poll after poll shows a clear majority of people across the U.S. oppose it.

Proponents of this destructive agenda have tried every trick in the book to claim falsely that the deep and harmful cuts to food assistance and health coverage would somehow not hurt people. They've done all they can to portray the people it would hurt as anything but who they are — people in communities throughout the country who need help to afford the basics, most of whom work or are children, seniors, or people with disabilities.

Despite obfuscation, the truth is clear — this bill will hurt people in every state if enacted. Senators who vote for it are responsible for its impact:

- **Taking health coverage away from about 16 million people and raising costs for millions more** through deep cuts to Medicaid and to Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace coverage, and its failure to extend the enhanced premium tax credits. This will cause many to lose access to life-saving medical care, accrue unaffordable medical debt, and have poorer health. The bill will lead to avoidable deaths, more uncompensated care, and more rural hospital closures.
- **Taking basic food assistance through SNAP from millions of people and cutting it for millions more.** The bill's still massive, unaffordable cost-shift to states could lead some states to *end their SNAP programs entirely*. Over the last 50 years, SNAP's nationwide availability has largely eliminated severe hunger and malnutrition throughout the United States. This bill walks away from the long-standing, bipartisan, and national commitment to food assistance that made that possible.
- **Singling out for especially harsh treatment people who are immigrants living and working in the U.S. lawfully.** The bill takes federal Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medicare, ACA marketplace coverage, and SNAP food assistance away from people who are in the country lawfully, including refugees, people granted asylum, and certain survivors of domestic violence or labor or sex trafficking, among others — people who have proven that they have faced persecution or survived violence and exploitation. Because people without a documented status are already ineligible for these supports, the federal savings come from taking help away from people here lawfully.

Add in the President's tariffs and this agenda would make all but the highest-income 20 percent of households *worse off*. The agenda directs harm on the very people the President and many Republicans say they are trying to help.

It shocks the conscience that Senate Republican leaders saw the impacts of the House bill — 16 million more people uninsured and millions losing help buying groceries, including families with children — and chose to double down.

Faced with similar, catastrophic projected health coverage losses in 2017 and a deeply unpopular bill, a small group of Republican senators, along with Democrats, had the courage to defeat the disastrous ACA repeal effort. There is still time for Republican senators to find their courage and do the same again.

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