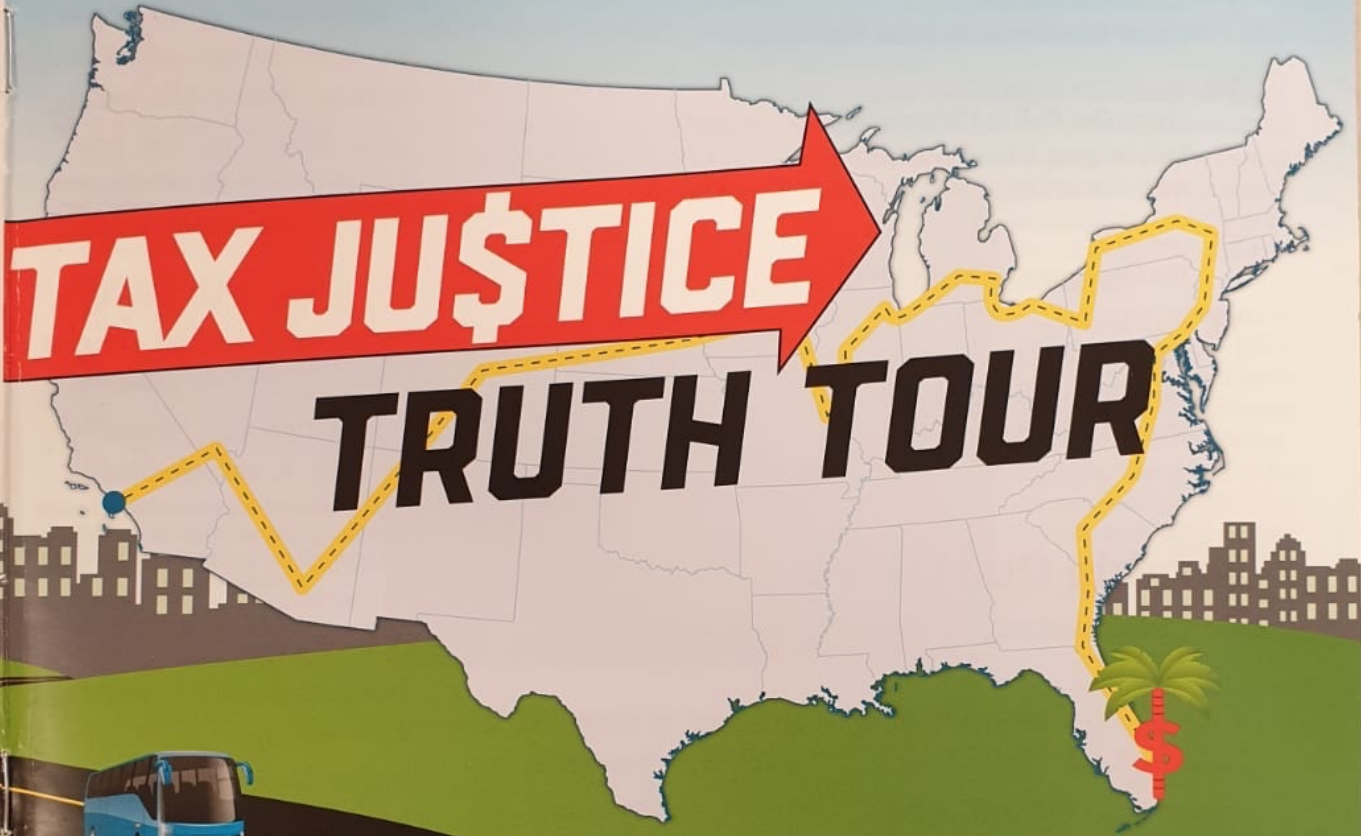




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NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace—educates, organizes, and lobbies for economic and social transformation.

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Start January with the Information Justice-Seekers Need

Make sure someone in your life gets our 2018 Congressional Voting Record

As the 115th Congress comes to a close, it's important to look back and see how our elected officials on Capitol Hill voted in 2018. What was their position on the Farm Bill or immigration policies? Did they vote to protect and promote the common good?

In the January issue of *Connection*, NETWORK will publish our annual voting record which scores Members of Congress based on whether they voted to mend the gaps in our country... or whether they voted for policies to make it harder for all people to live their lives with dignity. How do you think your Representative and Senators will score?

With a contribution of \$20, you can make sure that you, a family member, friend, or colleague will receive *Connection* magazine in 2019! Help us inspire others to become engaged in educating, organizing, and lobbying efforts to build a stronger, better nation.

You can give online at www.networklobby.org/join or by using the envelope inside this issue.

Give a Gift Today!



"Census" continued

fair and accurate count with the help and support of partners, and this is where We the People become so important!

The Census Bureau is undertaking nation-wide outreach efforts, including communications campaigns with paid advertising, partnerships with local organizations, and targeted outreach to immigrant and faith-based organizations. The Census Bureau has many opportunities to help your community or the community you serve be accurately counted so you will not miss out on critical funding and congressional representation for the next decade. The Census Bureau is looking for these partnerships now across the spectrum of government, non-profit, corporate and community organizations to spread the message and mobilize to support the goal of a fair and accurate count.

As this effort grows, the Census Bureau is also recruiting and hiring people to fill paid Partnership Specialist positions across the country. Partnership Specialists collaborate with Census partners, planning, developing, and managing the partnership agreements and coordinating with partners throughout the entire census time frame. This work needs to start soon, so it's important for the success of the 2020 Census to get the word out now about opportunities to be a Census partner or Partnership Specialist.

Learn more at
www.networklobby.org/census.

2012

"We need to hear, but more importantly we need to understand what has contributed to making these stories. In many instances it has been the policies initiated by our government. Policies that have worked for the few but abandoned the majority. This is not who we are as a nation and as a people. How have we wandered so far from our values of human dignity, fairness, family?"

— SISTER DIANE GUERIN, RSM

2013

"As we drive the names and places change but what remains the same are the stories of love and gratitude, coupled with fear and dread that we hear from our immigrant sisters and brothers everywhere we go. And so, we Nuns on the Bus continue to 'raise our hands and raise our voices' for comprehensive immigration reform at every stop along the way.

— SISTER EILEEN REILLY, SSND

2014

"All along the way, we'll be asking people to declare 'I am a voter!' and sign a pledge to vote. If they take the pledge we're inviting them to sign the bus. They'll be riding along with us on the bus. All of us together declaring 'Vote people first!'"

— SISTER JAN CEBULA, OSF

2015

"Being a 'Nun on the Bus' has shown me the importance of standing with those on the edge of our society as Pope Francis exemplifies... I'm recognizing the relationship between our economic injustice as a nation and the world view of white privilege that protects it. May we accept the challenge of Dr. King and be willing to lay down our lives 'to redeem the soul of our nation.'"

— SISTER JUDITH BEST, SSND

2016

"We asked three questions: Who in your family is difficult to speak with about politics and why? What worries you about this election? What gives you hope for our nation?... Curiously, the most difficult question was the last one about hope."

— SISTER BERNADINE KARGE, OP

Memories from the Road

We Are Not Meant to Live Divided from One Another

Returning to Our Authentic History

BY SISTER SIMONE CAMPBELL

Over the years, the story of what makes our country strong has been so thoroughly distorted that we barely recognize the truth anymore. Why is it that we think of the “lone ranger” or the “self-made” businessman long before we think of communities coming together for barn raisings or unions winning higher wages and workplace protections? The tale of unbridled individualism propagated by some political leaders is an unpatriotic lie that sows division instead of building up our shared future.

Community is at the heart of our nation and it is time that we reclaim that truth and express it in policy. Stop the unpatriotic lie of individualism and reclaim the profound truth that we are continuously building this nation together. When we live in that truth, we acknowledge that creating and investing in community is the only way we flourish.

It has taken decades for this unpatriotic lie to take hold. This means that we won’t dismantle it in a day or even one bus trip. But I pray that 50 years from now people will look back and say that it was 2018 when the tide of individualism finally turned in our nation and we began to journey back toward our authentic communal roots.

The first place to start turning this tide is our nation’s tax policy. Last fall, Republican leaders wrote and passed a hyper-partisan tax bill which the President later signed into law. The GOP leadership’s unabashed goal was to shift more money to those at the top of the economic ladder. Without any regard to what it would do to our national finances, they passed an enormous cut to our federal revenue. They found ways to pay for some of this, but these alleged “deficit hawks”

knowingly voted to expand the national debt by \$1.9 trillion over the next ten years.

We at NETWORK were trying to understand the magnitude of this amount. One of our staff members discovered that if a dollar was a second in time, then \$1.5 trillion dollars is more than 47,000 years! But some of our politicians treat this as if it were nothing. We cannot let that happen.

There are consequences of this individualistic policy. Clear and simple, it will erode all of the communal programs that make our nation the treasured place that it is. This tax law undercuts our infrastructure that allows businesses and the economy to function. This tax law weakens our environmental efforts to protect all of creation. The tax law threatens our capacity to ensure that all

in our richest nation on earth have access to healthcare. The tax law causes some Republicans to warn that we cannot afford to keep our promise to seniors who have paid into Social Security and Medicare for decades. This tax law harms our capacity to ensure that all in our nation have enough to eat. In short, this tax law undermines the common good.

So what do we do? We speak up and stay engaged. We talk to our neighbors about this short-sighted policy. We ask candidates where they stand on reversing the tax law. We pursue policies that support the common good, not just the wealthiest in our nation. These are policy actions that we can and must take.

But more important than all of the policy advocacy is changing how we talk about our nation. Let us come back from the brink of hyper-individualism and choose instead to speak of the needs of the whole community, and share our nation’s true origin story: “We the People!” ☀️



Nuns on the Bus join with community members to “Circle the City with Love” during the 2016 Republican National Convention in Cleveland

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Notable Quotables

What justice-seekers have been saying this quarter

"Protecting the right to vote affirms the divine imprint and inherent value of all of God's children."

Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner writing at Sojo.net about the new Lawyers and Collars Program

"If Trump is smart, he'll resist the temptation to lash out at these nuns via Twitter. Time will tell."

Steve Benen, writing for MaddowBlog

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"We believe you can ensure that the religious consciences of all people are honored and protected, rather than preferencing the beliefs of the few."

1,550 Catholic faith leaders expressing concern for Judge Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court nomination in a letter to U.S. Senators

"Hate legislates inequality. Hate hides behind religion and politics to promote oppression and inequality. Hate is not of God."

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling of the United Methodist Church speaking at the "United to Love" rally the same day as the planned white supremacist rally in Washington, D.C.

"The Dominicans are a mendicant order, meaning that for over 800 years we've begged. And so I'm begging Sen. Ernst for a Farm Bill that does not make hunger and poverty worse in this country."

Sister Kathy Flynn, OP, in an Op-Ed about the Farm Bill published in the Dubuque Telegraph Herald



The 2017 Tax Vote Explained

Unjust, Inequitable Tax Policy Will Have Long-Lasting Effects for our Country

BY LAURA PERALTA-SCHULTE, NETWORK SENIOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ADVOCATE

On December 22, 2017 President Trump signed the “Tax Cuts and Jobs Act” into law. The Republican Tax Law significantly rewrites the tax code to make wide-reaching, regressive changes to our federal tax system, largely benefiting corporations and the highest-income households with little relief for middle and lower-income households. The law also permanently eliminates the individual mandate of the Affordable Care Act, hurting the viability of our healthcare system.

The bill was crafted behind closed doors with no input from Democrats, and these major changes did not receive a public hearing in either chamber before passing in various stages in the middle of the night. Republican Congressional leadership put the bill on a fast track to President Trump’s desk from day one. The Republicans who secured its passage were chasing the dream of failed trickle-down economics. It is wrong for our nation.

NETWORK opposed the Republican Tax Law because it violated basic principles of tax fairness and encouraged even greater economic inequality. The bill violated NETWORK’s Principles of Tax Justice, which state that any changes to our tax policy must: make the tax code more progressive, raise revenue to support programs that invest in people and communities, and decrease inequality. The new law fails to do this, in fact, it adds \$1.9 trillion to the federal deficit over ten years, draining the treasury of valuable revenue for human needs programs. Additionally, the tax law’s disproportionate benefits for

businesses, stock holders, homeowners, and the wealthiest will exacerbate the racial wealth gap in our nation.

Since passing the law, President Trump and House Republicans, like Speaker Paul Ryan, have used the increase in the deficit as justification for proposing deep cuts to programs including Medicaid, Medicare, the Affordable Care Act, Social Security, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. It is clear that the Trump Administration and the Congressional Republicans would like to cut funding for these programs to pay for their tax law.

Despite increased annual corporate profits this year, corporate tax revenue is more than \$100 billion lower than last year because of the law’s corporate tax rate cut. These corporate tax cuts are not trickling down. Nine months since the law went into effect, working families have not received the economic benefit they were promised. 4.4% of workers have a pay hike or bonus connected to the tax law and most increases were a one-time bonus, not a permanent wage increase.

The provisions of the “Tax Cuts and Jobs Act” put our country on a dangerous path to higher economic inequality and decreased investment in our communities. We must put an end to these policies that enrich those who are already thriving and make changes to help those struggling while generating reasonable revenue for responsible programs.

Congressional Votes on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act by State

See how your Members of Congress voted on last year’s tax law and hold them accountable for their votes!

Alabama

YES: Sen. Shelby (R), Sen. Strange (R), Rep. Byrne (R-01), Rep. Roby (R-02), Rep. Rogers (R-03), Rep. Aderholt (R-04), Rep. Brooks (R-05), Rep. Palmer (R-06)

NO: Rep. Sewell (D-07)

Alaska

YES: Sen. Murkowski (R), Sen. Sullivan (R), Rep. Young (R-AL)

Arizona

YES: Sen. Flake (R), Sen. McCain (R), Rep. McSally (R-02), Rep. Gosar (R-04), Rep. Biggs (R-05), Rep. Schweikert (R-06), Rep. Franks (R-08)

NO: Rep. O’Halloran (D-01), Rep. Grijalva (D-03), Rep. Gallego (D-07), Rep. Sinema (D-09)

Arkansas

YES: Sen. Boozman (R), Sen. Cotton (R), Rep. Crawford (R-01), Rep. Hill (R-02), Rep. Womach (R-03), Rep. Westerman (R-04)

California

YES: Rep. LaMalfa (R-01), Rep. Cook (R-08), Rep. Denham (R-10), Rep. Valadao (R-21), Rep. Nunes (R-22), Rep. McCarthy (R-23), Rep. Knight (R-25), Rep. Royce (R-39), Rep. Calvert (R-42), Rep. Walters (R-45), Rep. Hunter (R-50)

Create Your Own Candidate Side-by-Side

Evaluate Your Candidates' Commitment to Mending the Gaps

With so many crucial elections across the country this year, we urge everyone to take the time to evaluate their candidates before voting in November. **Consider the candidates running for Congress in your district and fill out the side-by-side below, based on NETWORK's 2020 Vision to Mend the Gaps.**

Catholic Social Justice calls us to participate in public life and exercise our civic duty. We must engage ourselves and others this election season and choose the path of the common good, to seek a better life for everyone.

To create your own side-by-side: Read the candidates' websites and follow local reporting or other sources of information about the candidates to find their positions on the issues. If a public statement from a candidate is not available, consider contacting the candidate or raising the question in a public forum.

As we evaluate candidates on the issues below, we must acknowledge that racism and white supremacy are embedded into all policy issues, especially our economic policy. We are called to recognize and reject the structural racism that tears at the fabric of our nation and look for elected officials who support dismantling white supremacist systems and structures.

2018 ELECTION RACE _____

CANDIDATE A _____

PARTY _____

CANDIDATE B _____

PARTY _____

Tax Justice

No tax policy change should exacerbate the income gap, especially the racial/ethnic and gender wealth gaps.

Does the candidate oppose the 2017 Republican Tax Law? Will they work to repeal the tax law and repair the damage done to our federal revenue streams?

Over the next 10 years, the 2017 Republican Tax Law will add \$1.9 trillion to the national debt, with 83% of the tax cut benefits going to the top 1% in the year 2027.¹

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Living Wages

National legislation should move from adjusting a minimum wage to creating a living wage.

Do the candidates have a plan to raise the federal minimum wage to a just living wage?

The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour and has not been increased since 2009. The tipped minimum wage is \$2.13 an hour and has not been raised since 1991.² This causes many workers to earn "poverty-level wages" even when working full time.

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Family-Friendly Workplaces

The needs of women and families should be integrated into federal workplace policies.

Have the candidates supported policies that promote family-friendly workplaces such as paid family and medical leave, paid sick days, and flexible schedules for employees?

While the Family and Medical Leave Act provides access to unpaid family leave to the majority of working people in the United States, only 14% of civilian workers had access to paid family leave in 2016.³

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Access to Democracy

No individual or community should be disenfranchised by federal policy; everyone should be accurately counted and represented in Congress.

Do the candidates support strengthening and renewing the Voting Rights Act? Has either candidate spoken out against a "citizenship question" on the Census, which would impede an accurate count?

For this year's midterm elections, voters in 23 states face more restrictive voting policies than in 2010.⁴ Also, the decennial census is approaching in 2020, and it is essential that the Census Bureau collects a fair, accurate count which will decide Congressional apportionment.

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Access to Healthcare

Racial and economic disparities in healthcare should be eliminated.

Have the candidates condemned attempts to repeal the ACA? What are the candidates' positions on adding burdensome work requirements to Medicaid programs?

After numerous efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, cuts to enrollment advertising and outreach, and finally ending the individual mandate, the uninsured rate rose for the first time since the ACA was passed.⁵ The Trump administration also encouraged and began approving burdensome work requirements for Medicaid.

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Access to Citizenship

Immigrants should be welcomed into the country.

Do the candidates support welcoming immigrants, ending family separation, and protecting DACA recipients and other undocumented or vulnerable immigrants? Do the candidates have a plan for comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship?

President Trump hopes to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and wants Congress to allocate funding for it. The Trump administration also rescinded DACA and implemented a "zero tolerance" policy, which separated more than 2,342 children from their parents at the border while in effect.⁶

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Access to Housing

Everyone should have access to safe, affordable housing.

Do your candidates support funding for federal housing programs? Do they support policies that work to end homelessness in our country?

There is no state in the country where minimum-wage workers can afford a two-bedroom apartment without spending more than 30% of their income on rent.⁷ There were 553,742 people experiencing homelessness in the United States on a single night in 2017.⁸

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

PRINT ADDITIONAL COPIES TO SHARE: www.networklobby.org/sidebyside

Sources:

1. Distributional Analysis of the Conference Agreement for the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Tax Policy Center. December 18, 2017. <https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/publications/distributional-analysis-conference-agreement-tax-cuts-and-jobs-act>
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7. Out of Reach Report. National Low Income Housing Coalition. 2018. <http://nlihc.org/orr>
8. Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. December 2017. <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>



Advocate with Spirit-Filled Justice Seekers in Your State

Be a Part of a NETWORK Advocates Team

There are many ways to engage in advocacy with NETWORK. Many of our members and supporters receive our action alerts then make phone calls or send emails to their Members of Congress. Other members and supporters participate in our policy update webinars and in-district lobby visits or share our posts on social media. Each one of these individual actions helps NETWORK to build power and impact federal policy!

Recognizing the incredible power of community, we are thrilled to share that NETWORK is developing new Advocates Teams for our members and supporters!

Advocates Teams connect Spirit-filled justice seekers within a metropolitan area and equip them to act effectively for social change by rooting them in a network that shares their values and vision for our nation.

The teams work with NETWORK staff to build relationships with their Members of Congress to influence their actions on a bill or issue. Additionally, they become well-versed in federal policies that support the common good, take part in activities designed to advance legislation, and develop their organizing and leadership skills to strengthen their sense of community as a team.

Across the country, NETWORK's Advocates Teams are touchstones in our network of members and activists who use their collective power to mend the gaps and transform politics. Their participation in our work grounds our policy positions in the lived realities of the people in their communities. The teams contribute to NETWORK's vibrancy and impact by informing our mission and amplifying our voice with federal policy makers.

Currently, NETWORK has established Advocates Teams in Cleveland, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; East Lansing, Michigan, and Northern Virginia, as well as a statewide Advocates Council in Indiana. We are actively looking to build Advocates Teams in New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky, as well as in other parts of Michigan and Ohio. We are also open to organizing anywhere there is energy and interest!

If you are interested in joining an existing Advocates Team or starting a new Advocates Team, please contact info@networklobby.org with "Interest in Advocates Team" in the subject line. We can't wait to hear from you!

Team Activities and Advocacy

- Monthly in-person meetings
- Two in-district meetings a year, either with Members of Congress or staff
- Regular communication with Members of Congress via email, phone calls, town halls, etc.
- Represent NETWORK in the local media via letters to the editor, interviews, etc.
- Engage in community outreach or coalition work
- General participation in NETWORK programs or campaigns

Support Teams Receive from NETWORK

- Policy briefs and legislative updates
- Advocacy trainings
- Organizing trainings
- Media trainings
- Educational materials
- Catholic Social Justice resources
- Opportunities for reflection and contemplation

Your Help Is Needed to Achieve a Fair, Accurate Census

Over the past year, NETWORK has been sounding alarms and spreading the word about the importance of the 2020 Census. A modern, accurate, and equitable census is necessary for fair, effective governance that promotes the common good. An inaccurate Census count skews the allocation of needed resources and programs away from the communities that need them. Historically, there has been systematic undercounting of communities of color, people experiencing poverty, young children, and rural residents. This reduces access to federal funding and representation in Congress for these communities. An equitable census is the foundation for a society in which everybody has a chance for success, all have dignity, and everyone counts.

Conducting a census is constitutionally required and is our government's single largest peacetime undertaking. Right now the 2020 Census is in real danger even though it is still more than a year away. Census preparations to date have been wrought with serious challenges from funding shortfalls to administrative problems to legal challenges against a possible citizenship question. Robust efforts by justice seekers are needed to overcome these challenges if the 2020 Census is going to avoid gaps in hard-to-count populations. The Census Bureau can only accomplish a

continued on page 14

When it comes to human needs programs, Republican leadership thinks our national purse is empty, but no fiscal constraints exist when immigration or war get considered. The vicious cycle of tax cuts for the wealthiest, spending cuts for human needs programs, and increased funds for border security and war have gotten us into a bit of a mess.

Explaining the Republican Budget Cuts

President Trump's FY 2019 budget proposal called for at least \$57 billion in cuts to non-defense programs. Those cuts to pro-

grams that contribute to the common good are counter to the bipartisan spending caps agreement that Congress reached just a short time before President Trump's proposal. Further, President Trump is also pushing Congress to cut \$3 trillion over 10 years to entitlement programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicare, Medicaid, and other critical programs.

Here's how just some of the funds compare between President Trump's most recent budget proposal and President Obama's final budget proposal:

Program	President Obama (FY 2017)	President Trump (FY 2019)	Net Change
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG)	\$733 Million	\$0	-\$733 Million
Federal Work Study	\$983 Million	\$200 Million	-\$783 Million
Department of Education	\$69.4 Billion	\$63.2 Billion	-\$6.2 Billion
Housing and Urban Development	\$48.9 Billion	\$39.2 Billion	-\$9.7 Billion
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (Program Operations)	\$2.9 Billion	\$2.4 Billion	-\$500 Million
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	\$3 Billion	\$0	-\$3 Billion
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	\$82 Billion	\$73 Billion	-\$9 Billion

Let's make sure we're clear on this: these cuts President Trump is proposing aren't "savings." Instead, they are cuts to essential programs that will put already vulnerable individuals at greater risk. This threatens the stability and wellbeing of our communities.

In President Trump's first year, Republican leadership showed us their priorities. Instead of working to improve the health of our nation, they attempted to repeal the Affordable Care Act (numerous times) and finally dismantled the individual mandate. Instead of working to reduce poverty, they proposed budget cuts that would risk the livelihoods of some of our nation's most vulnerable people. And, instead of using prin-

ciples of tax justice to make sure everyone pays their fair share, they rammed through legislation that benefits the wealthiest in our nation.

This is the opposite of *mend* the gaps — they make them wider. The faithful way forward is to promote tax justice, promote reasonable revenue for responsible programs, and work for the common good.

As you cast your vote this November, ask yourself, "Which candidate will help mend the gaps in economic inequality? Which candidate demonstrates concerns for the common good? Which candidate will undo the damage of the 2017 Tax Law?" and vote for that person.

1. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/03/politics/paul-ryan-tweet-tax-cut-backlash/index.html>

2. <http://thehill.com/homenews/house/396573-gop-lawmaker-bought-multi-million-dollar-yacht-on-the-same-day-he-voted-for>

3. <https://cdn.americanprogressaction.org/content/uploads/sites/2/2018/04/05130812/MoC-memo-040518.pdf>

The Consequences of the 2017 Tax Law

Unraveling Reasonable Revenue for Responsible Programs

BY: ASHLEY WILSON, NETWORK COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AND
TRALONNE SHORTER, NETWORK SENIOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ADVOCATE

In February, touting the benefits of the Republican Tax Law, Paul Ryan tweeted “A secretary at a public high school in Lancaster, PA said she was pleasantly surprised when her pay went up \$1.50 a week... she said [it] will more than cover her Costco membership for the year” with a link to an article “Workers are starting to notice larger paychecks following tax overhaul.”¹ Assuming this teacher gets paid over the course of 52 weeks — which isn’t a given in many teaching contracts — this unnamed teacher would receive \$78/year from the tax bill. A basic Costco membership is \$60.

In comparison, a Republican Member of Congress, Rep. Vern Buchanan (Fla.) bought a yacht valued between \$1 and \$5 million on the same day the House passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.² The Center for American Progress estimates that just through one provision of the tax bill, Rep. Buchanan will receive a \$2.1 million tax cut.³ This provision, a higher tax deduction for business income earned through passthrough entities, will personally benefit many Members of Congress who voted for the bill, according to their public financial disclosures. This table shows some of the Members who are likely to benefit:

District/ State	Member of Congress	Estimated Tax Cut Based on Top of Reported Income Range
AZ-4	Rep. Paul Gosar	\$7,650
CA-21	Rep. David Valadao	\$1,000,000
CA-42	Rep. Ken Calvert	\$31,174
FL-15	Rep. Dennis A. Ross	\$100,000
FL-16	Rep. Vern Buchanan	\$2,131,750
FL-17	Rep. Tom Rooney	\$600,250
FL-26	Rep. Carlos Curbelo	\$106,500
GA	Senator Johnny Isakson	\$17,500
GA-12	Rep. Rick W. Allen	\$203,000
IA	Senator Chuck Grassley	\$9,121
MI-10	Rep. Paul Mitchell	\$3,000
MI-11	Rep. Dave Trott	\$640,000
MI-3	Rep. Justin Amash	\$105,000
NV	Senator Dean Heller	\$4,991
NY-23	Rep. Tom Reed	\$7,650
NY-27	Rep. Chris Collins	\$446,500
OH	Senator Rob Portman	\$69,550
OH-16	Rep. James B. Renacci	\$330,100
PA-12	Rep. Keith Rothfus	\$7,650
PA-3	Rep. Mike Kelly	\$15,100
SC-3	Rep. Jeff Duncan	\$14,038

*This is a shortened list. View full list at <https://cdn.americanprogressaction.org/content/uploads/sites/2/2018/04/05130812/MoC-memo-040518.pdf>

So, the so-called “benefit” from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act isn’t exactly distributed with justice in mind. The authors of this law — and those who voted for it — made their decisions based on how they (and their wealthy donors) would personally benefit. And, they attempted to appease their constituents by making a false claim that everyone would receive great benefit.

Nuns on the Bus is on the road this fall — before the mid-term elections — because the Republican Tax Law robs our nation of reasonable revenue for responsible programs. The law increases our federal deficit by giving handouts to the wealthiest individuals and corporations in our nation and claiming that everyone gets a tax break.

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In fact, we know that not only do we not all benefit, but the Republican Tax Law actively undermines the common good. Instead of shaping inclusive tax policies that promote equitable growth, the Republican Tax Law also exacerbates the racial wealth gap. Going forward, as we begin to feel the effects of the tax law and Congress debates additional cuts to federal programs, Congressional leadership will disinvest in the common good, especially programs that support individuals and communities of color.

Now, Republican leadership is again using their flawed argument to justify outrageous federal budget cuts to health, housing, labor and other human needs programs. These cuts are an attack on the common good of our nation! We know that when people at the economic margins of society do better, we all do better. To make the situation worse: while claiming we must cut human needs programs because of lack of revenue, President Trump continues to push for increased spending on border wall, and other programs that we don’t need.

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Living Our Call to Holiness through Advocacy

In April, Pope Francis released his third Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*. The subject of the exhortation is the call to holiness “for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities” (paragraph 2).

Readers around the world and across faith and secular backgrounds found inspiration in the exhortation’s study of the Beatitudes, as well as the five signs of holiness identified by Pope Francis as particularly significant for our culture today.

For us at NETWORK, one of the most profound sections of the exhortation was Pope Francis’s reflection on two harmful ideologies in paragraphs 100-103. Pope Francis begins by warning against neglecting one’s personal relationship with God in favor of working to create a more just world, then turns his attention to rebuking those who are critical of the social engagement of others. He specifically cautions against misjudging this engagement as “worldly, secular, materialist, communist, or populist” or relativizing it by saying there are more important issues, such as the single-minded defense of the unborn. (paragraph 101)

Pope Francis challenges this attitude, writing: “Equally sacred, however, are the

lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection” (paragraph 102). He continues, “Some Catholics consider [the situation of migrants] a secondary issue compared to the ‘grave’ bioethical questions.” This, he says, is not acceptable for Christians, who are called to stand in the shoes of those “who risk their lives to offer a future to their children.” Pope Francis asks pointedly, “Can we not realize that this is exactly what Jesus demands of us, when he tells us that in welcoming the stranger we welcome him (Matthew 25:35)” (paragraph 102)?

Pope Francis’s clear call to prioritize issues of social injustice as much as other issues is a striking statement from the highest authority in the Church. This is a message we hope people of faith take to heart in their lives and their work. NETWORK staff members were excited to read *Gaudete et Exsultate* and shared their reflections on the exhortation in videos published on our website at www.networkadvocates.org/rejoice. Watch the videos and share them with others!

NETWORK’S PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Uphold the dignity of each person as an equally valuable member of the human family
- Embrace our right and responsibility to participate with others in our shared public life
- Be in solidarity with those who are living in poverty in the struggle against structures of injustice
- Bridge divisions, rising above individual interest for the good of the whole community
- Unite with workers to build an economy that puts people, not profit, at the center
- Nurture the earth, recognizing that we are interdependent with the rest of God’s creation

NETWORK’s principles of Catholic Social Justice emerge from: Scripture, Catholic Social Teaching, the public witness of people of faith, and the lived realities of families and communities who suffer from injustice. We welcome people from religious or secular backgrounds to learn from and live out these principles.

To learn more, visit:
www.networkadvocates.org/catholicsocialjustice



Encouraging All to Participate

Before the 2016 election, NETWORK traveled across the country to speak with people experiencing the gaps in our nation who were undecided or didn’t plan on voting in the upcoming election.

In Indianapolis at Southeast Community Services, clients spoke about the low wages and the affordable housing shortage in their area that made it difficult to provide for their families. After looking at NETWORK’s side-by-side comparing Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump’s positions on affordable housing and living wages, a woman named Thomasina raised her hand and said “I’m going to vote! I wasn’t going to be-

cause I thought I was going to destroy something...but it’s important for my family!”

Thomasina shared that, like many people, she was overwhelmed with the prospect of voting. After hearing all of the negative attack ads on both sides she thought the best course of action was staying out of politics. In fact, it is the opposite. We need voices like Thomasina’s heard in our democracy if we are to truly be a government “by the people.” Share information about voting in your families and your communities, and encourage all to vote for candidates who will mend the gaps in our nation.