



Ask Speaker Paul Ryan to Pass a Faithful Budget!

We believe the federal budget is a moral document that reflects the priorities of our nation. Our budget must prioritize human needs programs, ensure funding to care for vulnerable members of our society, restore economic opportunity, and invest in community.

The Trump administration's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2018 would cut funding for programs that help working families in order to give tax cuts to corporations and the wealthiest people in the United States. As Congress enters into budget reconciliation discussions, we invite women religious across the country to write letters to Speaker Paul Ryan letting him know that a budget cutting protections for the most vulnerable families is out of line with Catholic teaching and values.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me"

Matthew 25:35

Writing your letter to Speaker Ryan:

- Introduce yourself; be sure to include your religious order affiliation, where you are located, and a brief description of your ministry.
- Choose an area or a few areas of the Trump budget that would have a particular impact on the people you minister to in your community or that resonate with your personal experience. Briefly explain the impact of the budget on you or your community using personal experiences when relevant.
- Highlight the principles of Catholic Social Justice that apply to the issue areas you've mentioned and emphasize the importance of a faithful budget that uplifts human dignity and meets the needs of people at the margins.
- Mail your letter in to the NETWORK office by **November 10**, and we will deliver all of the letters to Speaker Ryan's office on Capitol Hill.

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NETWORK advocates for policies that mend our nation's wealth and income gap and the gaps in access to democracy, healthcare, citizenship, and housing. Below is a description of how our seven "Mend the Gap" policy areas would fare in the proposed Trump budget. Much of the President's proposed spending goes against our vision of a society and economy of inclusion, as well as NETWORK's principles of Catholic Social Justice.

Tax Justice

Our faith teaches us that every person belongs to a single and interconnected human family. Our national decisions must take into account the good of the whole community, especially our sisters and brothers with the greatest needs. The proposed Trump budget sets Congress up to pass future tax reform that would cut tax rates for wealthy individuals and corporations. We believe all should be required to pay their fair share and any tax plan should avoid exacerbating wealth inequality. The Trump budget and plan for tax reform fails to uphold these principles because:

- It lowers tax rates for the wealthiest Americans and corporations
- It eliminates the estate tax on estates over \$5.49 million
- It eliminates taxes on capital gains for the wealthiest investors

Living Wages

Catholic Social Justice teaches that work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. Because all work has dignity, workers must be properly compensated with a living wage. The Trump budget not only threatens workers' safety but also eliminates programs aimed at expanding work opportunities for the most vulnerable. All those able and willing to work should be given the tools and opportunities to provide for themselves and their families. The Trump budget fails to uphold these principles by:

- Cutting funding for the Department of Labor by 21 percent, impacting agencies like OSHA that seek to make workplaces safe and accessible
- Reducing or eliminating vocational training and job-placement programs, particularly for people with disabilities, young people, at-risk youth, and older workers
- Fails to raise the minimum wage for federal employees which was last raised in 2014

Family-Friendly Workplaces

Family life is an important place for personal growth and should be safeguarded from the ills and stress of poverty, uncertain work schedules, and pay inequality. The Trump budget fails to provide for families, in particular women and children, by cutting programs and resources to families most in need. Catholic Social Justice requires that we reject policies that leave working families behind. The Trump budget fails because:

- There are no provisions for paid family sick leave
- Its proposed state-run, six-week parental leave is inadequate for working families
- It lowers funding for Child Care and Development block grants
- It decreases funding for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Access to Democracy

Our Catholic faith teaches that we have a responsibility to participate in politics out of a concern for, and commitment to, the good of the community. The Trump budget does not put resources toward ensuring the voices of all people of all identities are heard because:

- It cuts employees and institutions that investigate civil rights offenses, including voting rights restrictions
- It fails to fund the census at an adequate level to prepare for a fair and accurate 2020 Census

Access to Healthcare

Catholic Social Justice requires all of us to act as our sisters' and brothers' keepers. One way that we can meet the needs of our human family is by ensuring all people have access to quality, affordable healthcare. The Trump budget, combined with the Republican plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act, fails families and communities, particularly people with disabilities, those with preexisting medical conditions, and other marginalized communities:

- It makes \$610 billion in cuts to Medicaid over 10 years by changing to state block grants, and combined with similar proposals in ACA repeal bills, it attempts to shift the cost of healthcare for low-income people from the federal government to states
- It reduces mental health and substance abuse funding and grants
- It cuts necessary research funding to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- It would cap federal funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides necessary health services to children from low-income families, likely leading to reduced eligibility for children

Access to Citizenship

Jesus's teachings in the Gospels call us to "welcome the stranger," and we recognize that many of us in the United States were once immigrants looking for a better life. Our current immigration system leaves millions of families unable to unite or fearful of separation and fails to recognize the dignity of immigrants and refugees in this country. The Trump budget increases funding for the tracking, detention, and deportation of undocumented people while at the same time cutting programs that welcome immigrants and refugees into the United States to seek a better life for themselves and their families. The Trump budget proposal:

- Provides funds to drastically increase the number of border control and immigration enforcement officials
- Increases the number of detention centers for immigrants and immigrant families
- It increases predatory programs that identify and arrest undocumented people and make it more difficult for families to work and receive benefits
- It makes large cuts to refugee resettlement and humanitarian assistance programs

Access to Housing

Catholic sisters proclaim the dignity of all people and the right to shelter through much of their work across the country. President Trump's budget cuts programs that will leave even more individuals and working families without affordable housing options. This budget proposal would also diminish funding for programs aimed at reducing homelessness. Pope Francis has said, "We can find no social or moral justification, no justification whatsoever, for lack of housing." A moral budget must fully commit to ensuring all have safe and affordable housing in our nation. This budget fails because:

- It cuts assistance available through federal housing voucher programs and funding for public housing
- It eliminates funding for the national Housing Trust Fund, which was created to provide assistance to extremely low-income people
- It allocates no funding to the Community Development Block Grant program, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, Choice Neighborhoods, or the Self-help Homeownership Opportunity Program which provide assistance to families experiencing homelessness and resources for community stabilization and rehabilitation

Find specifics of NETWORK's 2020 Policy Vision and the potential impacts of the Trump budget on different policy areas and communities here:

NETWORK's 2020 Policy Vision: <https://networklobby.org/2020vision/>

Faithful Budget: <https://networkadvocates.org/advocacytoolbox/educate/faithfulbudget/>

Economic Policy Institute: <http://www.epi.org/blog/president-trumps-budget-kicks-people-when-theyre-down/>

Center for American Progress:

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2017/05/23/432848/trump-budget-neglects-basic-protections-funds-deportation-force-instead/>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: <http://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/the-trump-budgets-massive-cuts-to-state-and-local-services-and>