



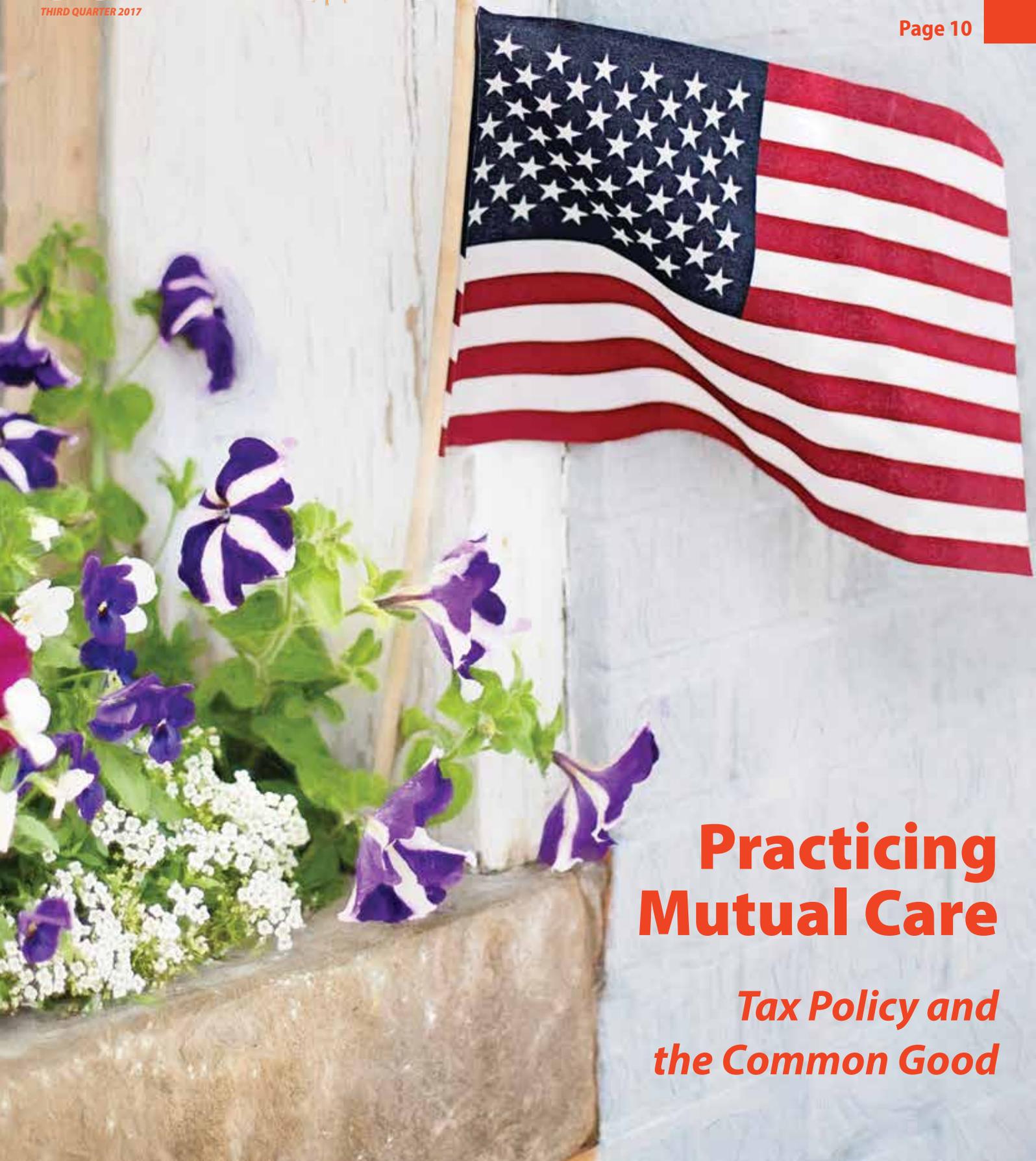
**NETWORK
CONNECTION**

THIRD QUARTER 2017

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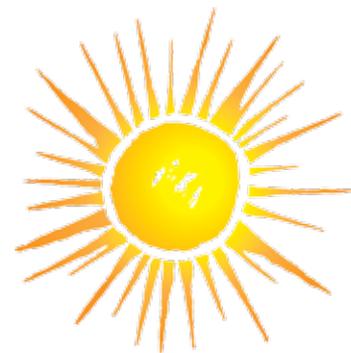
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THE NETWORK BOARD NEEDS YOU

NETWORK is seeking three new Board members to join the NETWORK Lobby and NETWORK Advocates Boards in 2018 and we are inviting all of our members to participate wholeheartedly in a "name-raising" process to help identify potential candidates for these positions. Go to p. 11 to read more.

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ON THE COVER

Our country can only flourish if we provide for all members of our national community. Photo credit: Jill Wellington

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Choosing Solidarity over Indifference

Tax Justice Can Renew our National Community

BY SISTER SIMONE CAMPBELL

When I say to groups that our primary issue to mend the income and wealth gap in our nation is tax policy, I often see eyes glaze over or people get ready to argue. But for us here at NETWORK, our faith leads us to engage this as a top priority and here is why!

What we have to remember is that from 1949 to 1979 every level of our society shared our post-war prosperity. The top marginal tax rate hovered around 80 percent. With that high of a tax rate at the top, executives were not as focused on increasing their salaries. In 1965, the average salary for a CEO was 20 times the amount for the average salaries of their workers.

This all changed in the 1980's with the advent of Ronald Reagan and his "trickle-down economics." Reagan and other supporters of this theory slashed tax rates for the top income bracket to less than 30 percent, and top executive salaries began to skyrocket while workers' wages stagnated. In 2015, the average CEO salary was 303 times their workers' average salaries. This is fueling our income and wealth disparity and hurting our people.

As Pope Francis says in *Joy of the Gospel*, paragraph 54:

...Some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system. Meanwhile, the excluded are still waiting. To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for that selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed.

This is the problem we have in our nation. The majority of people seem to be indifferent as the wealthiest people become more and more out of touch with those who are in the bottom 60 percent economically in our nation. We are becoming too far away from each other to be aware of our neighbors' real needs.

Trickle-down economics has driven a wedge between those at the top and the rest of us, and our whole nation suffers as a result. But Speaker Paul Ryan and his colleagues continue to push trickle-down policies that give even more money to those who already have too much. The American



On April 15, 2017, Sister Simone joined fellow faith leaders, elected officials, and activists calling for tax justice at the Tax March in Washington, D.C.

Health Care Act (AHCA) that passed in the House of Representatives gave \$680 billion in tax cuts to the wealthy over the next 10 years while taking away healthcare from 24 million people. This is wrong in any nation, but especially in a nation that can afford to provide care for its people.

NETWORK's position on tax policy is at the heart of our solution to this challenging reality. We believe that everyone should pay a fair share. We also know

that tax policy can promote or discourage certain behaviors. Our reflection and prayer lead us to say, let's create tax policies that preference the common good and work to end the racial wealth gap.

We dream of incentives for corporations and business owners whose executives are paid no more than 40 or 50 times what their lowest-paid employee makes. Or — what if businesses that pay a living wage received a tax credit because their workers are not relying on the social safety net? Could the home mortgage interest deduction be designed to offset the serious and systemic housing discrimination people of color have experienced over generations? These are just a few ideas, but the bottom line is that we need to end failed trickle-down policies and open our minds to a new way forward.

So, we urge you to join us in ending the indifference to unjust tax policies that is rife in our country. New tax policy will be created when our hearts are broken open to the needs of those around us. We all suffer in a system of cold, harsh individualism. Such a system is not aligned with our faith teachings or with the best of our nation. Let's establish a tax policy that pays for the services our nation really needs and actively reduces the income and wealth gap. It is possible to achieve this goal through prayer and action. The time is now! ☀️

Notable Quotables

What justice-seekers have been saying this quarter

"People of faith know we must act on the words of Pope Francis and end the 'economy of exclusion' for the good of all."

Tweet from Laura Peralta-Schulte, NETWORK Senior Government Relations Advocate (@onthebuslaura)

"If there's a problem in your community that you want to fix, the most important thing you can do is raise your voice."

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), "Ten Veteran Organizers on the Key to Effective Activism," printed in VICE Magazine

"Extreme proposals are a way to make less extreme proposals seem acceptable."

The Editorial Board of the New York Times
"The Problem Isn't Food Stamps, It's Poverty"

"There is no greater responsibility for the government than to be engaged in care for our most vulnerable citizens."

Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, Director of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness opposing cuts to Medicaid

"Someone must hold fast to the dream, declare it, require it, demand it. And that's us."

Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, "Make America, America Again" published in Global Sisters Report

"You can't do a tax cut for corporate America and the nation's highest earning people on the backs of the poor; we cannot as a people tolerate that."

Sister Carol Keehan, DC, president of the Catholic Health Association speaking about the American Health Care Act

"Too often, real, living people get lost in the line items of legislation and budgets."

Joint Op-Ed by Senator Bob Casey (PA) and activist and constituent Tianna Gaines-Turner published in the Philadelphia Enquirer

"Cutting SNAP by \$193 billion & turning our backs on the nation's hungry is shameful. America can and must do better."

Tweet from Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) (@rosadelauro)

"I encourage everyone to engage in constructive forms of communication that reject prejudice towards others and foster hope and trust today."

Tweet from Pope Francis (@Pontifex)

"I don't know how to be a person of faith and not be concerned about the poor."

Rev. William Barber II being interviewed on The Daily Show with Trevor Noah

"Taxes are essential investments in our society, and should be based on fairness and shared commitment."

Sister Simone Campbell responding to the release of President Trump's principles for tax reform

"Fear cannot have the final word."

Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark speaking against the potential deportation of Catalino Guerrero, a New Jersey resident, father, and grandfather of four

Supporting Tax Policies that Benefit Women and Families

BY: ANNA CHU, VICE PRESIDENT FOR INCOME SECURITY AND EDUCATION, AND
JILLIAN EDMONDS, FELLOW AT THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

The Trump administration and Republican leaders in Congress have promised to release a tax reform plan this summer, which is likely to include some of the largest tax cuts in decades. As elected officials debate tax reform, we must ensure policies that slash taxes for the wealthy few and big corporations under the guise of growing the economy do not become the new law of the land. The fallacy that tax cuts for the rich and corporations grow the economy has been the conservative talking point since Ronald Reagan first touted trickle-down economics, and has been widely discredited.¹ But not only is President Trump sticking to the same failed playbook of the past, the tax principles he released in April lack some of most important tax strategies that would help working families. For example, his principles do not mention expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), an effective anti-poverty program which would greatly benefit working women and families. In 2013, the EITC lifted 6.2 million people – including 3.2 million children – out of poverty (when taking into account the indirect employment and earnings effects of the EITC, this number nearly doubles).²

Although there are reports that President Trump is considering improvements to the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, those potential improvements alone do not mitigate the other troubling aspects of his tax plan. For instance, President Trump proposes reducing the corporate tax rate by 60 percent and getting rid of the estate tax, which impacts only the richest 0.2 percent of estates (including his own estate).³ Coupled with his budget, which guts crucial programs that provide basic living standards to low-income Americans, what emerges is a clear picture of the Trump administration's economic policy—giving big payoffs for the wealthy few and big corporations, while pulling the rug out from everyday women and their families.

Tax Cuts for the Rich Just Make the Rich Richer

President Trump's tax plan would be a massive giveaway to wealthy Americans and big corporations, and would harm women and families if enacted into law. He proposes slashing the top marginal individual tax rate to 35 percent and consolidating the current seven tax brackets into three. He also proposes slashing the corporate tax rate to an astoundingly low

15 percent. While he claims that such tax cuts would grow the economy and “create 25 million new jobs over the next decade,” this couldn't be further from the truth. A Congressional Research Service analysis of the top tax rates since 1945 found little or no association between reducing taxes on the wealthy and increased savings, investment, or productive growth.⁴ A review of research by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities of the impacts of a 1993 tax hike and the 2001 tax cut also revealed that job creation and economic growth were actually stronger in the years after the 1993 tax increases than in the years following the 2001 tax cuts.⁵

Instead of creating jobs or economic growth, tax cuts for the rich just make the rich richer. An analysis of OECD countries found that there was no correlation between the top tax rates and economic growth, but there was a correlation between lower top tax rates and greater income inequality.⁶ The earlier CRS study also found that cutting the top tax rate concentrates wealth at the top of the income spectrum because it incentivizes higher pay at the top end of the scale and allows those people to keep more of that money. By cutting taxes for the wealthy and corporations, President Trump's tax plan will contribute to growing economic inequality in our nation, which harms both our current economy and future growth.



Learn More! Sister Simone illustrates the growth in income inequality over the past 30 years with volunteers on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Watch the video online at: www.NetworkAdvocates.org/HumanBarGraph

Tax Cuts Threaten Funding for Critical Programs

While women and families likely won't get a fair shake in this upcoming tax plan, it's not their only worry. President Trump's tax principles work alongside his federal budget, which would cut programs that provide a basic living standard to low-income families. His budget proposes eliminating heating assistance for people in poverty, funding for meals for seniors, and several housing assistance programs. These cuts will affect women the most, potentially creating an even greater poverty gap between men and women. The Tax Policy Center found that cutting the corporate income tax to 15 percent would cost \$2.4 trillion 10 years — and that number skyrockets to \$4 trillion if the 15 percent rate applies to pass-through income.⁷

Unless the White House plans to simply increase the deficit, these tax cuts must be paid for somehow. The Trump administration has claimed it would pay for these cuts by raising tax revenue from other sources and from economic growth, but the budget shows they are more than happy to slash critical programs that provide a basic living standard for women and families. President Trump's budget proposes dismantling Medicaid as we know it and cutting its funding above and beyond the cuts in the ACA Repeal Bill. SNAP funding would be cut by nearly \$200 billion over the next decade — which would result in many states making it more difficult for families to get food assistance.⁸ He even breaks his promise to not touch Social Security by targeting people receiving Social Security Disability Insurance.

The President's desire to give huge tax cuts to wealthy people such as himself and take away critical programs that are lifelines for many women and families flies in the face of what his voters wanted and is a recipe for economic disaster. We can learn from what happened in Kansas, where massive tax cuts enacted in 2012 led to decreased revenue, underfunded schools, and cuts to services. Massive budget cuts won't make America great again — but they are likely to hurt many people.

Without federal funding for human needs spending, the service sites that Nuns on the Bus visited throughout the years would see their funding decrease, while the demand for their services increases.



A Tax Plan that Actually Helps Women and Families

Our tax policies should help the most vulnerable Americans by improving family tax credits and raising enough revenue for programs and services that support struggling families, rather than giving more tax cuts and loopholes to the wealthy and corporations. To have a tax plan that actually helps working women and families, President Trump and Congressional leadership should consider abiding by the following principles:

- Don't give more tax cuts for the wealthy and big corporations. They should pay their fair share in order to have a tax system that works for *all of us*.
- Tax policies should help the most vulnerable now. Tax reform should preserve — and improve — tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit that help families make ends meet.
- Support progressive tax reforms that would raise needed revenue— and expand opportunity for a stronger future for everyone. Every year, special interest tax loopholes cost the federal government billions of dollars. That's money that could be used to support struggling families and give them a chance for a better life.

A tax policy that supports women and children requires that everyone pays their fair share regardless of their income or political power. It allows the government to fully support families that need assistance when they are struggling, as well as fund public parks, clean air enforcement, and other government activities that benefit everyone. Rather than giving the wealthy and corporations the largest slice of the pie, a tax policy that supports women and children expands the pie for everyone, resulting in more opportunities that keep America great.



The Child Tax Credit benefits tens of millions of families across the country each year. Photo courtesy of Austin Schafer of Columbus, Ohio.

Endnotes

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Talking Faith & Taxes

We all pay taxes. Let's talk about it! Here's a framework for approaching a conversation about taxes:

1 Begin with faith or values. Many faith traditions have teachings on taxes and economic justice.

- Judaism has long preached about justice, and a just social order. The word tzedakah is connected to the obligation we have to make acts of financial charity towards people who are poor, carrying with it the idea that wealth is from God, and those with financial means have the responsibility to ensure those who lack resources are cared for and given the opportunity to eventually succeed on their own.
- From the same religious foundation, Christianity embraced the ideals of social justice preached by Jesus. Early Christian communities stressed collective well-being and called upon one another to sacrifice for those who were poor and marginalized. Often, they created funds from community collections in order to provide goods and services to the widowed and poor. Most Christian religions continue to emphasize just economic practices and acts of charity.
- Islam upholds the practice of Zakat, one of the five pillars of Islam. Initiated by the prophet Muhammad, Zakat is the obligation to give a portion of one's wealth out of concern for those who are poor or dispossessed. In addition to its obvious use on earth, Zakat is seen as necessary for one's salvation.

2 Discuss options for our tax system. There are three main types of taxes.

- Progressive — A higher rate is paid by higher income brackets than lower income brackets (Note that this is achieved by applying higher marginal tax rates to higher levels of income)
- Flat — A flat tax applies the same rate of taxation to all payers
- Regressive — A lower rate is paid by higher income brackets than lower income brackets

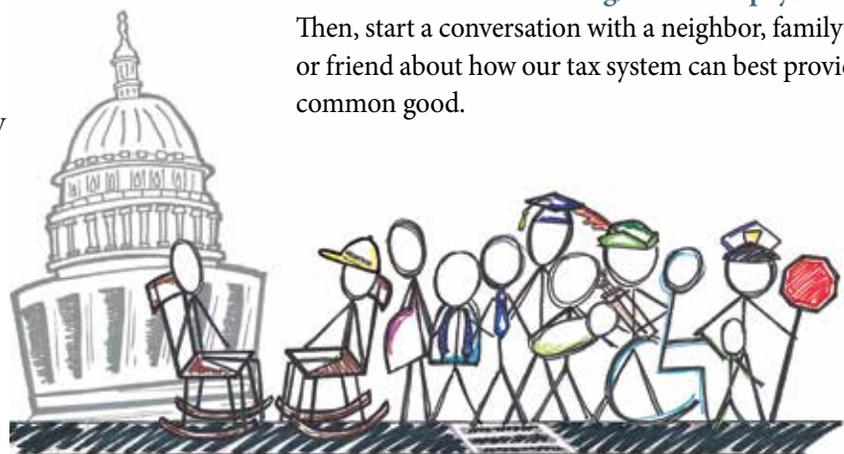
3 Talk about what we don't pay.

- Tax expenditures encourage certain activities and benefit certain groups, and they come in three basic forms: deductions, exclusions, and credits.
- Not all tax expenditures are bad — the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) lifts more families out of poverty than any other program, but others give wealthy corporations a sizeable cut on the taxes they pay that contribute to the common good.
- The issue is that the government doesn't count expenditures in the budget. Since these aren't listed as expenses they're often overlooked. Once a deduction is written, the money we could have collected is largely forgotten and the money we miss out on could lead to belt tightening and cutting in places that aren't really at fault.

4 Think about the benefits we share in as a result of tax revenues.

- Whether it's a public good that we all benefit from or a program that benefits certain groups, our tax revenues care for the common good in our nation and across the world.
- Many of the programs funded by our taxes go to providing services or care for the marginalized that our different faith traditions call us to care for—those who are poor, sick, hungry, or otherwise vulnerable.

For a more in-depth discussion of these topics, download NETWORK's tax justice curriculum "We the Taxpayers" at: www.networkadvocates.org/WeTheTaxpayers Then, start a conversation with a neighbor, family member, or friend about how our tax system can best provide for the common good.



Getting Tax Reform Right for Our Nation

We Must Come Together as Economic Inequality Grows

BY U.S. REPRESENTATIVE MIKE THOMPSON

Economic inequality is a real problem that too many families face. Incomes have not kept up with the cost of living, and hardworking Americans are struggling to get by. So as Congress considers reforming our tax code, it must focus on leveling the playing field for the middle class and working families.

It's been over 30 years since Congress made comprehensive changes to our tax code. A lot has happened in the interim—and our policies haven't kept pace. We've seen the rich get significantly richer while the middle class keeps shrinking. Congress has the power and responsibility to change this trend. We can and should focus on reforms to create good, stable, high-paying jobs and help the men and women in our communities take advantage of the opportunities available to them now.

For instance, I've spoken with a number of my constituents who are trying to care for their kids, work a fulltime job, and go back to school so they can land a promotion or change careers. They are superheroes trying to do it all for their families, and they could benefit greatly if Congress expanded access to the American Opportunity Tax Credit, which helps millions of students and working families pay for college.

We should also look at policies that combat inequality. Expanding the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, for instance, would provide more families with a place to call home. Improving the Child Tax Credit to keep pace with inflation would ensure families with young kids are able to pay their bills. I've co-sponsored legislation to expand all of these tax credits and provide additional help to everyday Americans.

These are not the only solutions, but they should be part of the discussion. Unfortunately, a number of my colleagues seem to think tax reform simply means tax cuts. That's just not true.

It's especially irresponsible to just cut taxes for the wealthiest among us—forcing everyday Americans to carry the bulk of our nation's tax burden. Unpaid-for tax cuts create serious shortfalls, forcing our government to borrow more and more money. As lenders cut checks to federal borrowers, there could be less financing—and opportunities—available to entrepreneurs, mom-and-pop shops, and new startups. That's bad for the economy, American ingenuity, and anyone who wants to achieve their dreams.



Rep. Thompson speaks with a small business owner who lives in California's 5th Congressional District.

We can make our tax code fairer, more competitive, and more efficient, but it shouldn't come at the expense of a ballooning national debt. And Congress shouldn't make promises it can't keep.

While the corporate tax rate is in need of reform, simply slashing it to 15 percent is not going to help middle class families. It benefits big businesses that in some cases already pay less than their fair share in taxes while shipping jobs overseas. Tax cuts alone will not solve our problems. We need comprehensive reforms and programs that put people first.

We need to have the difficult conversations about what's fair and what's best for our communities. Tax reform isn't easy, but it's necessary if we want to close the wealth gap and help our families thrive.

Partisan rhetoric and ideology can't be allowed to divide us. One party alone shouldn't make changes to a tax code that affects all of us. We need to make sure we address the concerns of all our constituents, regardless of party.

As a senior member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, I'm ready to work with Chairman Kevin Brady and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make our tax code fairer. But make no mistake: Democrats will oppose any tax plan that only helps the rich get richer while forcing working families to shoulder even more of our country's tax burden.



The Patriotic Millionaires Put the Common Good First

Proud “traitors to their class,” members of the Patriotic Millionaires are high-net worth Americans, business leaders, and investors who are united in their concern about the destabilizing concentration of wealth and power in America. Our mission for the Patriotic Millionaires organization is to build a more stable, prosperous, and inclusive nation by promoting public policies based on the “first principles” of equal political representation, a guaranteed living wage for all working citizens, and a fair tax system.

The Patriotic Millionaires believe the country will be more stable and more prosperous when all of its citizens are authentically engaged in the governance process, rather than ceding control to a small number of self-interested actors. We believe that the trend of growing economic inequality is both bad for society and bad for business; and that the government - not “the market” - should guarantee a livable wage for all working Americans. We believe a national “living wage” guarantee will ensure a stable level of aggregate demand, which will fuel our economy more broadly, ushering in a new era of prosperity for all Americans, including rich ones. We believe our nation’s social and economic progress requires significant and constant public investment, and that the wealthy, who benefit the most from our country’s assets and institutions, should naturally and gladly pay the greatest share of whatever taxes are need to support that investment.

The Patriotic Millionaires group first came together in 2010 to demand an end to the Bush tax cuts for millionaires, instantly sparking the public’s attention. Since then, the group has appeared on outlets from the Daily Show with Jon Stewart to the PBS NewsHour; from the front page of the Boston Globe to The History Channel. In addition to driving the public narrative, the Patriotic Millionaires have met privately with hundreds of elected leaders from both parties and have testified in front of dozens of lawmakers on issues from minimum wage to campaign finance to tax policy.

In a political system that has become more of an oligarchy than a democracy, the power of the group lies in being seen as members of the “elite” class arguing against their perceived self-interest. Elected representatives have grown accustomed



The Patriotic Millionaires appear with President Obama on April 11, 2012 to call on Congress to enact the Buffett Rule.

to tuning “the people” out, and if they will listen only to those with power and money, then it is time for those citizens with power and money to leverage their position to advance the general welfare and to build a better country for future generations of Americans. By the time the United States celebrates her 250th birthday in 2026, the Patriotic Millionaires aim to make the “first principles” of equal political representation, a guaranteed living wage for all working citizens, and a fair tax system the dominant governing framework in America.



Sisters and Dominican Volunteers march for climate justice at the People’s Climate March in 2014



We're Looking for a Few Good Names

NETWORK is seeking three new Board members to join the NETWORK Lobby and NETWORK Advocates Boards in 2018, and we are inviting all of our members to participate wholeheartedly in a "name-raising" process to help identify potential candidates to fill these positions.

If you know someone who would excel in this role as described below, including yourself, please complete the name-raising form at www.networklobby.org/nameraising no later than September 1. Earlier responses are appreciated.

Qualifications:

- ✓ Must be a member of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice;
- ✓ Must have a serious commitment to the principles of Catholic Social Justice; and
- ✓ Must be able and willing to attend and participate actively in Board meetings and monthly committee conference calls. Current committees are: Development, Finance, and Governance & Administration.

Time Commitment:

- ✓ Two weekend in-person Board meetings a year, in Washington, D.C.
- ✓ Monthly committee conference calls with pre-meeting review of materials.
- ✓ Additional assignments from committee work or if one takes on a leadership position.
- ✓ If elected, a new Board member would be asked to serve a three-year term with the option of serving up to three terms.

Areas of Expertise: While no individual member possesses all the skills needed on a national Board, NETWORK believes that a well-developed Board will include members with a variety of skills. In 2018, the Board is seeking people with one or more of these areas of expertise:

- ✓ Development/Fundraising;
- ✓ Financial: Budgeting, financial management, investments; or
- ✓ Previous Board or business/legal experience.

Other: We are seeking creative and strategic thinkers committed to mending the economic gaps. Experience working with congregations of women religious and/or experience working in low income communities is a plus.

Demographic Diversity: NETWORK is committed to having diverse voices on its Boards and believes the Boards should reflect diversity of race and ethnic heritage; economic background; ministry or occupation; geography; age; affiliation (or not) with a community of women religious; and personal or professional skills. In 2018, the Board is seeking candidates who have one or more of the following characteristics:

- ✓ under 45 years of age;
- ✓ a person of color; and/or
- ✓ residents from the Northwest or Western U.S.

NETWORK is open to all who share our passion; therefore, Catholics as well as non-Catholics are welcome.

The NETWORK Boards are grateful for the gifts of time and discernment you will offer on behalf of this endeavor and are hoping for a robust response from our membership as we seek to fill these positions on our Boards. Questions can be sent to nameraising@networklobby.org.

Sisters Say: America, We Can Do Better On Healthcare

When the Dominican Sisters of Hope learned that the American Health Care Act (or AHCA) would strip coverage from at least 24 million people and gut Medicaid in order to give \$600 billion in tax breaks to the wealthy and corporations, we were outraged. We saw that the proposed amendments allowed states to get rid of protections for people with

pre-existing conditions and knew that creating high-risk pools to segregate the sick into to higher-cost plans would not solve this problem.

Here's the thing: many of our sisters are career nurses. We've seen first-hand how poor and marginalized communities are hurt the most from a lack of healthcare and federal funding.

We're committed to defending the poor, the marginalized, and everyone who depends on the Affordable Care Act. So, we took action and called our Senators to voice our concerns for those who will be without healthcare. As Dominican Sister of Hope Pat Jelly, OP put it: "We must care for each other, each other's children, and for future generations."



NETWORK Welcomes the Northern Virginia

The newly organized Northern Virginia NETWORK Advocates Team is working hard to support our goals in a variety of ways. Meet some of the members:

Mary Farrell writes, “To me, NETWORK is faith in action; going forward with the love and learning our faith has given us, bringing Jesus to the world. We hear it from Pope Francis! We all have a duty to do good, and NETWORK has given me the opportunity; for that, I’m very grateful.”

Team member Nancy Sheehy met Sister Simone a few years ago, but as a stay-at-home mother, she says: “I didn’t see myself being part of the NETWORK effort at that time.” In 2016, she helped register voters leading up to the election and soon after joined the team. Recently, Nancy participated in a lobbying visit to Senator Mark Warner’s office.

Stephanie Conley (also known as Nana Stephanie) heard about NETWORK’s advocacy on healthcare from Mary Farrell. Stephanie says, “As a former nurse, I am particularly concerned about healthcare. After participating in several visits to Congressional representatives urging them not to repeal the Affordable Care Act without a suitable replacement, I decided to join the team.”

Barbara Hazelett, explains, “The NETWORK vision and call to Mend the Gaps inspired me to dedicate a significant portion of my free time to furthering this mission.” On behalf of the team, Barbara has taken the lead in reaching out to interfaith organizations with common interests and to members of the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates.

Kathey Moore says, “Each of us share a commitment to Catholic Social Justice values and take actions that impact ‘the least of these.’” Equipped with training and handouts on the federal budget from NETWORK staff, Kathey visited the district offices of Senator Tim Kaine and Congressman Donald McEachin (VA-04). “We laid out our priorities: funding for the 2020 Census, funding for housing programs, no funding for a border wall and more.”

Janet Rife first visited the NETWORK office in 2003 just after the invasion of Iraq, to hear testimony from a group of Iraqi women. She says, “In 2016, I became freshly aware of the importance of NETWORK’s long experience, faith perspective, and tireless work in our nation’s capital. I am the mother of Brian, a 52-year-old man who sustained a traumatic brain injury in 1985 at the age of 20. In the ensuing years, I’ve been his advocate,

often writing to legislators and lobbying in Richmond for better options for him and thousands of other Virginians with disabilities. Now, with the draconian cuts that have been proposed to Medicaid, I am highly motivated to be a NETWORK advocate.”

With four lobby visits already completed, the Northern Virginia NETWORK Advocates Team certainly has a bright future ahead of them, full of continued advocacy and growth! Please contact NETWORK organizer Catherine Gillette (cgillette@networklobby.org) if you are interested in joining the team. ☀️



Members of the Northern Virginia Advocates team hold the Ten Commandments of the American Health Care Act



Advocates Team



Healthcare outside the Capitol during a protest days before the House voted on the

Educating Justice-Seekers One Presentation at a Time

Catherine Guerrier and Emma Tacke, NETWORK Grassroots Mobilization Associates, presented a workshop called “The Racial Wealth and Income Divide” on the history of the racial wealth and income gap in the United States at the annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference in April 2017. During the workshop, they discussed the factors that created and maintain the racial wealth and income gap including: homeownership, household income, family support and inheritance, education, and unemployment.

The Grassroots Mobilization team offers a variety of workshops and presentations to NETWORK members and student groups on NETWORK’s Mend the Gap issues. Additionally, they provide trainings on various advocacy techniques, including how to have an effective lobby meeting. Contact us to schedule a presentation for your group of justice-seekers!



American Health Care Act Passes the House, Federal Budget Decisions Approach

An update from D.C. on key votes held during the past quarter and social justice issues on the horizon



Key Vote: Healthcare

After four months and multiple failed attempts, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives narrowly passed the American Health Care Act (AHCA) on May 4, 2017 with a final vote of 217 – 213. At the start of the year, it looked like repealing the Affordable Care Act in the GOP-controlled House would be easy for Speaker Paul Ryan and President Trump. The volume of calls, visits, emails, and other actions taken by healthcare advocates, however, changed that.

Our pressure caused many moderate Republicans to come out in opposition to the bill, even as the House Freedom Caucus held out to make it more conservative. On March 23, Republicans hoped to achieve a symbolic victory by repealing the ACA on the seven-year anniversary of its passage. Ultimately though, they were forced to pull the bill from the House floor because it did not have the votes to pass.

In April, Representative Tom MacArthur (NJ-03) added an amendment that made the bill more acceptable to the Freedom Caucus. His amendment made a bad policy even worse, but it gave the party just enough votes to pass the bill. With the Senate now considering this harmful policy, the future of access to healthcare in our nation is uncertain.



On the Horizon: Federal Budget

In May, President Trump signed an omnibus spending bill passed by Congress that finalized fiscal year (FY) 2017 spending. Later that month, the Trump administration released its FY 2018 budget proposal calling for deep cuts to social spending, significant increases in military spending, and tax cuts for wealthy individuals and corporations.

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations committees now turn their attention to the FY 2018 Federal Budget, and will begin debating specifics of the 12 appropriations bills that must be passed to prevent a government shutdown. It is widely expected that final budget decisions for 2018 spending will not be finished until early December. Meanwhile, the government is also approaching the debt ceiling, and Congress must vote to raise that limit before it is reached, likely in August or September.

NETWORK is working to ensure our priorities – healthcare, housing, census, and homeland security – receive funding at the proper levels. Each of these was woefully underfunded in President Trump's budget with the exception of homeland security, which allocated an unacceptable amount of additional funds to pay for a deportation force, increased detention, and the construction of a wall on our southern border. We continue to proclaim the need for a Faithful Budget that cares for all in our nation.

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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Building a Legacy of Justice

BY MAGGIE BREVIG

When you envision how our country can promote justice and dignity for all through the next 40, 50, or 100 years... What do you hope it will look like?

You may not realize the game-changing impact that “planned gifts” can have for the future of our justice movement—but making a plan today can make an enormous difference to what we can achieve decades from now.

By investing in our justice movement with “planned gifts” — made through a will, trust, life insurance plan, retirement plan or other vehicle, you can help future generations fulfill our radical dreams for justice.



Creating a *legacy* of justice with NETWORK continues the generosity you have shown during your lifetime, and makes a substantial, enduring contribution to the causes that are close to your heart. A legacy gift also helps ensure the stability of NETWORK’s future, and the continuation of our long-term efforts toward justice for the generations of justice seekers to come.

Join our *Bread and Roses Society* by including NETWORK in your will, trust, retirement plan, or other form of planned giving.

I’m available if you have any questions or to help with your reflection and planning for the future. Asking for information does not obligate you to make a gift, and I will hold your inquiry in confidence. You may also visit www.networklobby.org/waystogive/plannedgiving for more information.

Thank you for joining us in envisioning—and acting for—a just society.



Maggie Brevig is NETWORK’s Development and Membership manager. You can reach Maggie at mbrevig@networklobby.org or 202-601-7864.

May Day 2017

NETWORK Marches for Immigrant and Worker Rights

May Day, or May 1, has historically been remembered as both the feast day of St. Joseph the Worker and International Workers' Day. In recent years, May Day marches have grown with a focus on immigrant rights. This year, NETWORK was proud to march with fellow justice-seekers in Washington, D.C. and call for policies that support immigrants and workers. ¡Sí se puede!

