

NETWORK Federal Budget Talking Points — Oct. 2023

Congress must pass a budget that supports vital programs and focuses on tax justice

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

For NETWORK community only—not for public distribution

Congress Must Pass a Budget that Funds Vital Programs and Focuses on Tax Fairness

We are deeply concerned that Congress is moving forward with spending bills that **take food, housing, and other key investments away from people with low incomes – while paving the way for more tax breaks for the wealthy and big corporations.**

Our Values

- **The Federal budget is a moral document outlining what we as a nation choose to invest in, and these investments affect individuals and communities across the country.**
- NETWORK believes we should focus on priorities that bring about shared and broad prosperity such as investing in health care, housing, child care, food assistance, education, and tax justice.

We need to support, not slash, funding for vital human needs programs.

- Millions of our neighbors are facing food and housing insecurity, challenges with high child care costs, and other hardships that make it harder to make ends meet *[definitely share your own experiences and add local/[state data](#) here!]*
- Yet, a handful of extreme conservatives in the House Congress are now pushing for deep cuts in spending bills.
 - These include **proposed cuts to WIC’s nutrition assistance for families with young children, along with resources for schools, early childhood programs, and affordable housing.**
- Instead of cuts, we need to **increase resources for human needs.**
 - In upcoming spending bills, it is critical to prioritize funding for human needs and reject cuts to programs like WIC, Head Start, schools, child care, mental health, and housing through the annual spending process.
- **We are counting on you to fight any such harmful efforts and instead push to strengthen anti-poverty assistance.**

Unjust tax policies are hurting our communities.

- In addition, we are frustrated that some policymakers pushed to have people with the lowest incomes bear the brunt of deficit reduction – while not doing anything to **have the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share.**
- In fact, the House Ways and Means Committee passed a tax package this summer with hundreds of billions in tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy.
 - According to the [Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy](#) (ITEP), under the proposed tax package, **the poorest fifth of Americans would receive an average tax cut of just \$40 next year** while the richest one percent would receive an average \$16,550 tax cut next year.

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Therefore, Congress must:

- 1) Pass a FY24 budget that sufficiently supports the vital services that help our communities thrive.**
 - a. By addressing urgent needs and funding critical human needs programs, the budget can provide for a robust, stable economy and secure nation.
 - b. The budget must be free of poison pill policy riders that are harmful and irrelevant to the functions of government.

 - 2) Focus on tax fairness.**
 - a. We believe responsible budget choices mean support for increasing revenues from wealthy individuals and corporations, both by collecting what they owe under current law and by fair new tax policies targeting the wealthiest and corporations.
 - b. We are concerned about the Ways and Means package passed in June which paves the way for additional tax breaks for the wealthy.
 - c. **We are counting on you to oppose further tax breaks for wealthy individuals and corporations and instead fight to make our tax code more fair by prioritizing policy like an expanded Child Tax Credit that reaches more lower-income families.**
 - d. With fair and adequate revenues, **Congress can fund the investments we need and still make substantial reductions in the deficit.**
- The decisions you make around investments to keep pace with need, ensure adequate and fair revenues, and protect against dangerous cuts will have profound consequences for every American.
 - We urge you to **choose responsibility over recklessness**, to ensure shared prosperity and to prevent self-inflicted wounds to our economy.