

**AMERICANS PAY  
THE PRICE FOR  
THE TRUMP-GOP  
CONTROLLED  
CONGRESS  
AGENDA.**

*Democrats*

**FOR THE PEOPLE**

# THE GOP AGENDA: NOT FOR THE PEOPLE

**R**epublicans want Americans to believe that they're better off under unchecked GOP control of Washington.

President Donald Trump tweets that "Our Economy is setting records on virtually every front - Probably the best our country has ever done. Tremendous value created since the Election."<sup>1</sup> Speaker Ryan tells the press that "by just about any economic measure, the American people are better off now."<sup>2</sup>

But after nearly two years under President Trump and the GOP Congress, families are struggling to keep their heads above the rising waters of health insurance premiums, prescription drug prices, and basic living expenses. Real wages are flat. The Republican tax law has enriched the wealthiest 1 percent but exploded the deficit and left behind hard-working families. Massive infrastructure needs remain unaddressed in communities across America.

Meanwhile, Republicans continue to push legislative, executive and legal assaults on health care that threaten to inflict even greater damage on tens of millions of Americans.

## HEALTH COSTS RISING:

**President Trump promised that under Republican leadership, health care would be "a lot less expensive for you..."<sup>3</sup>**

Yet Republicans have taken actions designed to sabotage the health insurance marketplace and drive up premiums and out-of-pocket costs for millions of Americans.

- Average health insurance benchmark premiums in the marketplaces rose 34 percent under the first year of GOP control of Washington;
- Next year, the CBO has projected a 10 percent average premium hike because of the health care sabotage provisions in the Republican tax law.

On top of the already higher costs the GOP's actions have caused, Republicans have attempted and continue to attempt to inflict even more disastrous damage to Americans' health care. The House-passed legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act (the American Health Care Act) would have pushed 23 million Americans off of health care, raised insurance costs for millions more, allowed insurers to impose what the AARP called an "Age Tax" on older Americans, and dismantled key protections for people with pre-existing conditions. While this measure was ultimately defeated, Republicans have announced their intent to renew their effort to repeal the ACA in the next Congress.

**In early October 2018, President Trump promised, “We will always protect Americans with pre-existing conditions... That’s a major part of what I’m all about.”<sup>4</sup>**

But with the support of the Trump Department of Justice, Republicans continue to pursue a lawsuit in federal court attempting to strike down the ACA’s protections for the 130 million people with pre-existing conditions, casting a shadow of uncertainty over tens of millions of families.

## **PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS SOARING**

**President Trump once declared that big pharmaceutical companies are “getting away with murder”<sup>5</sup> and that “We’re going to negotiate like crazy”<sup>6</sup> on Medicare Part D prescription drug prices.**

But when he unveiled his agenda in May 2018, President Trump backed down from his promise to enable Medicare Part D to negotiate down drug prices – and Big Pharma stocks surged.<sup>7</sup> The GOP tax law even handed Big Pharma massive tax breaks that have funded more than \$50 billion in stock buybacks to enrich top investors and executives.<sup>8</sup>

Now seniors and families are stuck with soaring prescription drug costs:

- In the first seven months since passage of the Republican tax law, an investigation by the Associated Press found 4,412 brand-name drug price increases and 46 price cuts, a ratio of 96-to-1.<sup>9</sup>
- 16 of the top 20 best-selling drugs in the United States increased significantly in price in the first year of the Trump Administration, mostly by double digits.<sup>10</sup>
- 12 of the top 20 most costly drugs for Medicare Part D increased in price in the first year of the Trump Administration.<sup>11</sup>

## **TAX SCAM FAILING FAMILIES**

**In selling Republicans’ tax bill, President Trump claimed it “would likely give the typical American household a \$4,000 pay raise.”<sup>12</sup>**

In practice, however, the benefits of the new tax bill were designed to flow overwhelmingly to big corporations and the wealthiest 1 percent:

- More than 25 million Americans will see either a tax hike or no benefit at all from the GOP tax bill next year, <sup>13</sup> according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.
- The tax law will ultimately hand 83 percent of the benefits to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans.

The \$1.9 trillion unpaid-for Republican tax law will add more than \$5,700 to the national debt burden for every man, woman and child in America – threatening the future of Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and other commitments to the health, education and well-being of seniors and families.

## REAL WAGES STAGNATING

**President Trump frequently celebrates “another great day for the Stock Market. Consumer Confidence is at Record High.” <sup>14</sup>**

But while President Trump and top Republicans point Americans to the rising stock market, an estimated 85 to 90 percent of stocks are owned by the top ten percent of wealth holders in the U.S – and 43 percent of Americans do not have any money invested in the stock market at all. <sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, average real wages for workers nationwide have been stagnant, according to data compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Joint Economic Committee has found that in the 19 months between President Trump’s inauguration in January 2017 and August 2018<sup>16</sup>:

- Real average hourly wages dropped in 30 states;
- Real average hourly wages were flat in 2 states;
- Only 6 states and the District of Columbia saw real average hourly wage increases of over 1 percent.

In 2017, seventy-eight percent of full-time workers said they live paycheck to paycheck, up from the year before, according to a poll conducted by CareerBuilder.<sup>17</sup> The rising gas prices, transportation costs, food prices, health care costs and prescription drug prices caused or enabled by Republican policies are eating up much of the meager gains for working families under the Trump Administration.

## UNMET INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

**President Trump promised Americans “the biggest and boldest infrastructure investment in American history.”<sup>18</sup>**

However, he and the Republican Congress have refused to bring forward meaningful legislation to fill the massive infrastructure backlog in the United States. Instead, Republicans spent \$2 trillion on their tax bill, and have continued to propose infrastructure funding cuts in the President’s budget.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers’ 2017 Infrastructure Report Card, the United States has a \$2 trillion infrastructure funding gap,<sup>19</sup> crumbling and outdated infrastructure that burdens families and businesses across America. The ASCE projects that failure to close this gap will result in:

- \$3.9 trillion in losses to the U.S. GDP by 2025;
- \$7 trillion in lost business sales by 2025; and
- 2.5 million lost American jobs in 2025.

Over 24 million Americans also lack access to high speed internet at home, 19 million of whom live in rural areas and 1.4 million people living on tribal lands lack access. In addition, 2.3 million students and more than 1,300 schools do not have adequate high-speed internet access—with the majority located in rural areas and small towns.

## FOR THE WEALTHIEST, NOT FOR THE PEOPLE

Republicans’ policies have frequently exacerbated the inequalities between wealthy Americans and everyone else. Under Republican control of Washington, communities of color, young people, older Americans, rural America and veterans have fallen further behind.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, real median income for both African-American and Asian American households fell between 2016 and 2017.<sup>20</sup> In 2017, African-American households median income was \$27,887 lower than the median income of non-Hispanic whites, 7 percent worse than 2016,<sup>21</sup> and the real median income gap between Hispanic and non-Hispanic whites narrowed by only 0.4 percent from 2016 to 2017, still \$17,659 less than non-Hispanic whites.<sup>22</sup>

Younger Americans are struggling. Between 2016 and 2017, real median household income for householders age 15 to 24 fell by 5.8 percent, and real median household income for householders age 25 to 35 rose by less than 0.1 percent.<sup>23</sup> The stagnant and falling real wages for millennials are also taking place amid a rising burden of student loans for many members of this generation. An estimated 7 in 10 college graduates from the class of 2016 had borrowed for their educations, carrying an average of \$37,172 in student debt<sup>24</sup> as they entered the workforce. Meanwhile, as of 2017, roughly 1 in 6 children live in food-insecure households.<sup>25</sup>

Older Americans and seniors are especially vulnerable to the rising costs of living, and prescription drug costs in particular. Out of the 20 most costly drugs for Medicare Part D, 12 increased significantly in price since President Trump took office, 11 of those had double-digit price increases, and 10 of those increased in price by more than 15 percent.<sup>26</sup> As of 2016, the average debt in families in which the head of the household is age 75 or older was \$36,757.

The farm economy is reeling, deepening the unique challenges facing rural communities. According to the USDA Economic Research Service<sup>27</sup>, net farm income, a broad measure of profits, is forecast to decrease 13.0 percent from 2017 to 2018. Total farm sector return on assets in 2018 is expected to be 2.32 percent, the fourth lowest level since 1990 and well below the 1990-2018 average of 7.12 percent.

Veterans are also particularly at risk from Republicans' efforts to cut health care and nutrition assistance. Nearly 1.75 million veterans rely on Medicaid<sup>28</sup>, and almost 1.5 million veterans live in households that participate in SNAP.<sup>29</sup> Wait times for care at VA facilities have significantly worsened under the Republicans' Veterans Choice Program, with veterans being forced to wait for care for up to 70 days, up from an average of 51 days in 2016.

The consequences of rising inequality affect all Americans. By directing more and more resources to the wealthy, we reduce educational opportunities for our children, lower social mobility, and limit training programs for the manufacturing jobs of the future.

## CONCLUSION

Republicans are trying to focus attention on the stock market and the wealth of big corporations. Democrats are lifting up the voices and the stories of the hard-working Americans that the President and the GOP congress have forgotten.

We are fighting For The People, with bigger, bold thinking to address the challenges facing the families that the President left behind. We pledge to:

- **Lower your health care costs and prescription drug prices** – which are devastating the pocketbooks of working and middle class families across America;
- **Increase your pay through strong economic growth by rebuilding America** – bringing broadband Internet to every corner of the country and investing billions in America's aging infrastructure, schools, and public housing, while creating millions of good-paying jobs;
- **Clean up corruption to make Washington work for you** – cracking down on the dark money from special interests polluting the air our children breathe, the water they drink and the food they eat.

House Democrats have compiled a comprehensive report that outlines the real, devastating impact of nearly two years of the Republicans' special interest agenda on the economic security, health and well-being of families across the country.

It's clear from the findings of this report that the American people cannot afford another two years of the GOP's policies.

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- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.speaker.gov/press-release/better-now-speaker-ryan-s-remarks-economic-club-washington-dc>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJ66dV-dGuk&feature=youtu.be&t=27m15s>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/oct/3/trump-on-campaign-trail-emphasizes-protections-for/>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/01/trump-press-conference-drug-industry-233475>
- <sup>6</sup> <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2018/05/trump-broken-every-populist-campaign-promise-prescription-drugs-infrastructure.html>
- <sup>7</sup> Wall Street Journal, “Trump’s Plan to Cut Drug Prices Leaves Industry Relieved,” May 11, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-unveils-proposals-to-slash-prescription-drug-prices-1526064902>
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- <sup>9</sup> Associated Press, “AP investigation: Drug prices going up despite Trump promise,” September 24, 2018, <https://apnews.com/b28338b7c-91c4174ad5fad682138520d>
- <sup>10</sup> “Skyrocketing Drug Prices: Year One of the Trump Administration” Democratic Staff Report, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, May 11, 2018, <https://democrats-oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/Skyrocketing%20Drug%20Prices-Year%20One%20of%20the%20Trump%20Administration.pdf>
- <sup>11</sup> “Skyrocketing Drug Prices: Year One of the Trump Administration” Democratic Staff Report, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, May 11, 2018, <https://democrats-oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/Skyrocketing%20Drug%20Prices-Year%20One%20of%20the%20Trump%20Administration.pdf>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://twitter.com/FoxBusiness/status/921219426875203584>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://itep.org/finalgop-trumpbill/>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/trump-tweets-market/>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1711/stock-market.aspx>
- <sup>16</sup> “Economic Snapshot of the States,” Joint Economic Committee Democrats, September 21, 2018 [https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/\\_cache/files/eb68071e-76a3-457c-8563-5efcab3a9a8d/september-2018-state-economic-snapshots.pdf](https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/eb68071e-76a3-457c-8563-5efcab3a9a8d/september-2018-state-economic-snapshots.pdf)
- <sup>17</sup> <http://press.careerbuilder.com/2017-08-24-Living-Paycheck-to-Paycheck-is-a-Way-of-Life-for-Majority-of-U-S-Workers-According-to-New-CareerBuilder-Survey>
- <sup>18</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/03/29/trump-promised-1-5-trillion-in-infrastructure-spending-hes-1-percent-of-the-way-there/?utm\\_term=.ee7b2bc72af8](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/03/29/trump-promised-1-5-trillion-in-infrastructure-spending-hes-1-percent-of-the-way-there/?utm_term=.ee7b2bc72af8)
- <sup>19</sup> <https://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/the-impact/economic-impact/>
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- <sup>21</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: Income and Poverty in the United States: 2017
- <sup>22</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: Income and Poverty in the United States: 2017
- <sup>23</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: Income and Poverty in the United States: 2017
- <sup>24</sup> <https://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2016/05/02/student-debt-is-about-to-set-another-record-but-the-picture-isnt-all-bad/>
- <sup>25</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/90023/err-256.pdf?v=0>
- <sup>26</sup> <https://democrats-oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/Skyrocketing%20Drug%20Prices-Year%20One%20of%20the%20Trump%20Administration.pdf>
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