Budget Markups Comms Toolkit
May 2025

NEW Resources from FSA!

- Messaging
  - Topline Talking Points
  - Rebuttal Talking Points

- Links + Resources
  - Markup Breakdown: state impacts of major proposals in each committee
  - State Impact Sheets: state specific numbers of people and programs at risk
  - LTE Guide: Best practices and samples

- Sample Assets (Press Release + LTE)
  - Release: Energy & Commerce (Medicaid)
  - LTE: Energy & Commerce
  - Release: Agriculture (SNAP)
  - LTE: Agriculture
  - Release: Ways & Means (Taxes)
  - LTE: Ways & Means

Core Message: ***ANY* cuts to health care (Medicaid and credits that keep insurance costs down) or food assistance (SNAP) in the budget is *a choice* to put billionaires first**

Topline Talking Points

- Gutting federal programs that help working families isn't a necessity, ***it's a choice*** that Republican lawmakers are making in order to fund more tax breaks for billionaires.

- *Any* cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, Head Start or other vital programs could be avoided by allowing tax cuts for the rich to expire at the end of the year.

- These cuts have nothing to do with efficiency, they are ***cuts to benefits*** plain and simple.
  - *At least 13 million Americans will lose their coverage due to cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act.*
  - *Health care costs will skyrocket for 20 million Americans – by an average of $700 per year – by failing to extend ACA tax credits.*
  - *While Ag text isn't officially out at this moment, estimates show that 1.2 million veterans, 4.8 million seniors, and 14.6 million children could go hungry due to cuts to food assistance / SNAP.*

- These cuts aren't about fiscal responsibility, this budget would still ***increase the deficit***.
  - *Republicans are still looking to hand the very rich and corporations **at least $4.5 trillion** in tax giveaways.*

- *All* cuts could be avoided by simply asking the wealthiest to pay their fair share, just like everyday Americans do. It comes down to priorities.

What we've said (May 9, 2025):

> "Proposals to change Medicaid under the Trump/GOP tax and budget framework would in fact result in steep cuts to health care and more for people who rely on these safety net programs. We've heard from people in Michigan, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and beyond who say that cuts to their Medicaid benefits are a death sentence for them or a loved one," **said Fair Share America Executive Director Kristen Crowell.**
>
> "We can't state this plainly enough: any cuts to Medicaid, disability benefits, food assistance, or other essential services should be out of the question for this Congress, especially because the choice is people's health and welfare versus tax cuts for the rich. Donald Trump calls it a 'big, beautiful bill;' we call it 'cruel and inhuman.' To all of the Republicans jumping ship or thinking about jumping ship and voting no on this bill: it's the right call."

Rebuttal Talking Points

Economic Growth

- We've heard this tax cut song before and know how it goes. In reality, tax cuts for the rich and big business don't boost the economy or help everyday Americans. Tax cuts for the rich fail to deliver on the economic benefits they promise every time.

- The best way to create a strong economy is to put more money in the pockets of hardworking Americans and invest in the programs that build the middle class.

- Instead, Republican leadership is pushing through deep cuts that will harm working families, destabilize the workforce and slow the economy.

- As the Commonwealth Fund found:
    - Not extending the enhanced premium tax credit for marketplace health insurance coverage would result in the loss of 286,000 jobs nationwide.
    - Cuts to Medicaid and SNAP harm state economies by eliminating the "multiplier effect" which means that every dollar spent generates over a dollar's worth of economic activity.
    - Cuts in federal funding for Medicaid and SNAP shrink revenue for local hospitals, doctors' offices, pharmacies, nursing homes, grocery stores and more.
        - As a result, 1.03 million jobs could be lost nationwide due to the Medicaid and SNAP cuts, including 477,000 health jobs, 78,000 food-related jobs, and 476,000 other jobs.
    - Each state would face job losses across sectors as a result of these cuts, as detailed in this table.

Waste Fraud and Abuse

- These cuts have nothing to do with efficiency, they are ***cuts to benefits*** plain and simple. Don't let politicians call them anything else.

- The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) found that 100% of the savings from the GOP Medicaid proposals would come from:

    - shifting costs to states
    - rescinding eligibility for Medicaid
    - reducing payment rates to providers
    - limiting optional benefits like mental health care
    - kicking people off coverage

- As the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy wrote: “It’s Not Even Close”:
    - “The cuts in federal Medicaid spending under discussion among House Republicans dwarf the amounts of fraud, waste, and abuse in Medicaid.”
    - “While all states could undoubtedly make their programs more efficient, there is no state that will be able to absorb a 27 percent cut in federal Medicaid matching payments over the next ten years by reducing waste, fraud, and abuse. It’s not even close.”
    - “Shifting federal costs to the states has nothing to do with reducing waste and abuse. It has everything to do with knee-capping the nation’s largest health insurer for children and families.”

People Widely Oppose This Bill:

- KFF (May 2025) - Large majorities of Americans, including Republicans, oppose federal funding cuts to Medicaid
- Pew Research Center (March 2025) - Most Americans continue to favor raising taxes on corporations, higher-income households
- Families Over Billionaires (February 2025) - Voters Overwhelmingly Oppose Extending Tax Cuts for Wealthy Individuals and Corporations
- Groundwork (February 2025) - Republican Plan to Gut Vital Programs, Shower Ultra-Wealthy With Tax Breaks is Unpopular With Voters

Fair Share America and our state partners have heard the widespread opposition first-hand at our own events and town halls. People of all political persuasions are turning out to say they oppose tax breaks for the rich and are terrified about how to survive losing their health care and other essential benefits.

Links/ Resources

- Markup Breakdown: impacts of major proposals being considered by each committee, with links to relevant state by state breakdowns and reports
- State Impact Sheets: state specific numbers of people and programs at risk
- LTE Guide: Best practices and samples

Sample Assets

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE: Energy & Commerce

House Energy & Commerce Committee Guts Medicaid, Advancing Budget Bill that Will Harm [# of STATEians], Shift Costs onto State, and Slow [STATE’s] Economy

[CITY, STATE] — Today, the US House Energy & Commerce Committee marked up its budget reconciliation bill, turning cut targets from the GOP budget framework into devastating policy that will harm working people, blow a hole in the state budget, and stall the local economy just to fund tax breaks for billionaires.

The Committee pulled the bulk of its $880 billion in budget cuts from Medicaid, a program that provides access to health care for [# of STATIANS], including [#] children, [#] people with disabilities, and [#] working adults.

“The budget reconciliation package that passed out of the Energy & Commerce Committee today is a shameful statement of the misplaced priorities of the Republican leadership in Congress – sticking it to hard working families for no reason other than to give more tax handouts to the wealthiest few,” said [NAME, TITLE]. “These policies will be devastating for [STATIANS], pushing [$XX million] off onto the state, forcing millions to lose access to health care, and putting hospitals around our state at risk of closure.”

The cuts advanced in the Energy and Commerce section of the budget reconciliation bill will have ripple effects as [STATE] will be forced to make impossible choices to deal with the loss of federal Medicaid funds. [STATE] will either have to raise taxes or cut other priorities like education and public safety to fill the gap or pull back on health care slashing payments to doctors and hospitals, reducing optional services like home-based care and mental health support, or dropping people from coverage altogether.”

“The policy decisions have nothing to do with fiscal responsibility or improving efficiency, they are cuts to benefits that people rely on, plain and simple.” [NAME] continued. “The result is clear: more families without care, more pressure on already-stretched providers, and more people in [STATE] left behind.”

The Energy & Commerce Committee’s final bill included several measures that will shift costs onto states, and eliminate coverage for kids, people with disabilities and working families.

- < Insert appropriate section / description on each of the policy proposals >
- Proposal 1: Replace Federal Matching with A Fixed Payment for Medicaid Expansion
- Proposal 2: Eliminating the Medical Provider Tax for States
- Proposal 3: Per Capita Caps for on Medicaid Expansion Recipients
- Proposal 4: Adding Work Requirements for Medicaid

“Budget cuts aren’t required — they’re intentional and a clear choice. The Committee could have chosen to protect working families instead of padding the pockets of the ultra-wealthy. Individual members could have chosen to stand up to their leadership and fight for their constituents. Instead the GOP pushed ahead a plan that shifts the burden onto the states and guts essential programs that help people when they need it most. Families in [STATE] deserve better.”

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SAMPLE LTE: Energy & Commerce

To the Editor: Congress Is Choosing Billionaires Over Working Families

This week, the House Energy & Commerce Committee advanced a bill that will gut Medicaid and do real harm to families in [STATE]. The lawmakers who voted for it are making a clear choice — cutting health care, just to fund more tax breaks for billionaires and we all deserve better.

The bill would slash Medicaid funding, which means states like ours will be left to either raise taxes, cut school and public safety budgets, or take health care away from people who need it most. It’s likely that we’ll see a combination of all three. That’s not a budget solution — it’s passing the buck to our state and creating a disaster for working families, seniors, children, and people with disabilities.

What’s worse, these cuts won’t even reduce the deficit. In fact, this plan would increase it, all to pay for nearly $5 trillion in new tax breaks for the wealthy and big corporations.

These aren't tough choices. They're the wrong ones.

If our representatives truly cared about fiscal responsibility or the well-being of their constituents, they would vote no on any plan that guts programs people rely on just to protect tax loopholes for the richest Americans. The people of [STATE] are paying attention — and we will remember who stood with us, and who didn't.

— [Your Name]
[City], [State]

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE: Agriculture

House Agriculture Committee Advances Budget That Threatens Food Assistance for [# of STATEians] and Shifts Costs to [STATE] Families and Taxpayers

[CITY, STATE] — Today, the U.S. House Agriculture Committee passed its portion of the GOP budget reconciliation bill, advancing policies that would weaken the SNAP program, put more families at risk of going hungry, and shift significant new costs onto states — all to help fund tax breaks for billionaires and wealthy corporations.

The bill includes sweeping changes to how the federal government funds the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which currently helps [# of STATEians] afford groceries and keep food on the table. SNAP supports children, seniors, veterans, and working people across [STATE] and is one of the most effective tools for reducing poverty and stimulating local economies.

"The budget reconciliation package passed out of the Agriculture Committee is a direct attack on families in [STATE]," said [NAME, TITLE]. "At a time when grocery prices are already high, this bill would take food off the table of working families already at risk and force the state to either raise taxes or cut other priorities like schools and public safety to pick up the federal government's tab."

The cuts included in the Agriculture section of the reconciliation bill will create serious challenges for state leaders. By introducing a federal requirement that states begin to match SNAP funding, the bill shifts a major portion of food assistance costs onto [STATE], without even existing infrastructure for managing or funding SNAP benefits at the state level. That means [STATE] would have to:

1. **Raise taxes or cut other vital services** to come up with the money.
2. **Limit who qualifies for help**, taking food assistance away from families who need it.
3. **Let families go without**, and allow hunger to increase across the state.

"This bill isn't about making food assistance or SNAP more efficient or even being fiscally responsible — these shameful policies will be making people suffer just so that the wealthy can get more tax breaks and it makes no sense," said [LAST NAME].

SNAP doesn't just help families — it helps the local economy. Every $1 in SNAP benefits generates about $1.50 in economic activity, supporting grocery workers, farmers, truck drivers, and small businesses across the state.

The Committee's bill includes four major policy changes that would dramatically undercut SNAP: [Adjust as necessary]

- **Proposal 1: Add a state cost-sharing requirement**
  Forces states to begin paying a portion of SNAP benefits, increasing pressure on state budgets and likely leading to eligibility restrictions.

- **Proposal 2: Expand harsh work requirements**
  Expands time limits and work mandates to older adults and parents, putting as many as 1.4 million people at risk of losing food assistance.

- **Proposal 3: Restrict updates to the Thrifty Food Plan**
  Limits future benefit increases and would reduce the average SNAP benefit by $1.40 per person, per day — at a time when food prices remain high.

- **Proposal 4: Restrict state waivers**
  Cuts off states' ability to provide benefits in high-unemployment areas or for vulnerable groups like veterans and young adults aging out of foster care.

"These proposals will increase hunger and hardship, especially in rural communities and small towns where SNAP's food assistance has the greatest economic impact," [NAME] continued. "This isn't fiscal responsibility — it's a choice to take food off the table so that billionaires can keep their tax breaks. Budgets are a statement of values, and clearly with the Republican leadership in charge, DC's values are way out of whack."

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SAMPLE LTE: Agriculture

Letter: SNAP Cuts Would Hurt [STATE] Families and Local Economies

The House Agriculture Committee just passed a bill that would gut the SNAP food assistance program — and families in [STATE] will pay the price.

SNAP helps [# of STATEians], including kids, seniors, veterans, and low-wage workers, put food on the table. It's one of the most effective tools we have to fight hunger and support local economies. Every $1 in SNAP benefits generates about $1.50 in economic activity — supporting grocery workers, farmers, and small businesses across the state.

But instead of protecting this lifeline, Republican leaders are pushing changes that would increase hunger and shift the cost of feeding families onto states. The bill would force [STATE] to start covering a share of SNAP benefits — without any infrastructure in place — meaning we'd have to raise taxes, cut other essential services, or take food away from families.

It also expands harsh work requirements, slashes future benefit increases, and blocks states from offering support to people in tough situations — like veterans and foster youth.

This isn't about making government more efficient. These are deliberate choices to take help away from people who need it, just to protect tax breaks for billionaires.

Budgets reflect our values. And this one tells families in [STATE] that they're not the priority. Congress should reject these cruel proposals and protect SNAP.

— [Your Name]
[Your City], [Your State]

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE: Ways & Means

House Ways & Means Committee Passes Massive New Tax Breaks for Billionaires, Working Families in [STATE] Are Forced to Pay the Price

[CITY, STATE] — Today, the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee passed its portion of the GOP's budget reconciliation bill, advancing a tax plan that hands trillions in new breaks to the ultra-wealthy and big corporations, while doing nothing to help — and much to hurt — working families across [STATE].

The bill makes permanent the Trump-era tax cuts, which have already funneled the vast majority of their benefits to the top 10% of earners. It also doubles down on policies that reward wealth over work, from preserving the pass-through loophole for millionaire business owners, to slashing the corporate tax rate and fully repealing the estate tax. These decisions come at a time when other parts of the GOP budget reconciliation are codifying the deep cuts to health care, food assistance, and education just to pay for the tax committee's handouts.

"This bill is a slap in the face to working families in [STATE]," said [NAME, TITLE]. "Instead of expanding asking the wealthy to pay their fair share to fund our nation's priorities and build strong communities, the Republican leadership is giving billionaires another windfall that has already proven costly and ineffective at helping jobs and our economy. These massive tax cuts for billionaires are the wrong choice for America and our families here in [STATE] will pay the price."

The proposals passed by the Committee as part of the budget reconciliation bill today would:

- **Extend the failed 2017 Trump tax cuts** — costing nearly $3.5 trillion, with 80% of the benefits going to the wealthiest households.
- **Keep loopholes for the rich** — like the pass-through business deduction and corporate tax cuts, which have failed to boost wages or create good jobs.
- **Repeal the estate tax**, allowing multi-million dollar inheritances to go untaxed, while everyday families continue to pay their share.
- **Stack costs onto working families** redirecting the hard earned tax dollars from the working and middle class into the pockets of already-rich billionaires who pay far less than their fair share].
- <insert something about final decisions on SALT and other Trump tax proposals, if applicable>

"These tax breaks won't help the economy — they'll make it worse," [LAST NAME] continued. "Corporations used their last round of tax cuts to boost stock prices, not raise wages. Meanwhile, everyday Americans are being asked to give up health care, food aid, and public schools just so billionaires can keep more of what they'll never spend. It's not just wrong — it's unsustainable."

The Ways and Means Committee's final bill includes: <include whatever is appropriate>

- **Proposal 1: Tax Cuts for the Ultra-Wealthy**
    - Makes the 2017 Trump tax law permanent, preserving lower rates for the top income brackets and eliminating the estate tax.
- **Proposal 2: Raise or Repeal the SALT Deduction Cap**

    - A tax change that primarily benefits the wealthiest households in high-income areas.

- **Proposal 3: Roll Back Clean Energy Credits**
    - Proposals to scale back or repeal IRA clean energy incentives would threaten jobs, raise energy prices, and undermine state efforts to build a clean economy.

“Budgets are about choices. And this one says loud and clear: billionaires matter more than families,” said [NAME]. “Instead of investing in people, the GOP chose more handouts to the rich — and communities in [STATE] will suffer because of it.”

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SAMPLE LTE: Ways & Means

Letter: GOP Tax Plan Leaves [STATE] Families Behind

This week, the House Ways and Means Committee passed a tax bill that does everything for billionaires and nothing for working families in [STATE].

The bill makes the Trump-era tax cuts permanent — a giveaway that mostly benefits the top 10% of earners — and piles on even more tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy and big corporations. It keeps loopholes that let millionaire business owners and giant companies pay less than the rest of us, repeals the estate tax for the richest heirs, and leaves out any help for families just trying to get by.

Meanwhile, the rest of the GOP budget calls for deep cuts to programs like Medicaid, SNAP, and Head Start — the things working families count on. So let’s be clear: this tax plan isn’t paid for. It’s paid off — by stripping away services people need just so billionaires can hoard more.

Budgets show us what politicians value. And this one shows that Republican leaders value wealth over work. Families in [STATE] don’t need more handouts for billionaires — we need leaders who will stand up for us, not sell us out.

Congress should reject this bill and put working people first.

— [Your Name]
[Your City], [Your State]

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