



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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The Ryan Plan: Exacerbating Poverty and Inequality in the U.S.

Editor's note: Executive Director Deborah Weinstein is available for interviews on the GOP budget proposal and its failure to address human needs.

Deborah Weinstein, executive director of the Coalition on Human Needs, issued the following statement today in response to the House GOP anti-poverty proposal:

“The plan put forth by House Speaker Paul Ryan and his GOP colleagues actually is a blueprint for exacerbating poverty and inequality in the United States. While lacking in legislative and policy specifics, this blueprint cannot be separated from the budget proposal championed by House Republicans. This year’s GOP budget derives three-fifths of its cuts from programs that help low- and moderate-income Americans, while protecting tax cuts for the wealthy and for corporations.

“The issue of funding is a gaping hole in this proposal. It costs money to give people the tools to escape poverty. But the budget approved by the House Budget Committee earlier this year would cut low-income programs by \$3.7 trillion over 10 years, mostly in health care, but also cutting SNAP by \$150 billion (a 30 percent cut between 2021-2026), and cutting Pell Grants and other low-income education programs. Do Ryan and his colleagues now disavow these cuts?

“While the report mostly chooses rhetoric over specific proposals, it does hint at an intention to reduce cash assistance. In one very troubling example, it criticizes Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for children with disabilities, calling for “access to needed services in lieu of cash assistance.” Children who receive SSI have severe and long-term disabilities, requiring time and expense that diminish their parents’ ability to work. Denying cash assistance to these families will drastically worsen their ability to provide for their children’s significant needs.

“The report vaguely favors giving states more authority to change federal programs. This appears to be a nod to Speaker Ryan’s past recommendation to create ‘Opportunity Grants’ – fixed funding to states that allow them to change rules in effective safety net programs. It is also similar to the House Agriculture Committee’s Child Nutrition Reauthorization proposal to allow three states to take a reduced funding level and change school meals program standards as they choose. There should be no doubt that freezing or reducing funding while allowing states to change program rules is no way to reduce poverty or increase opportunity. Instead, it will give states more incentives to deny help to people who need it.

“If Speaker Ryan and his colleagues are serious about cutting poverty and expanding opportunities for American families, they should embrace policies that actually benefit working families. This requires investing in good jobs, raising the minimum wage, ensuring an adequate safety net, adopting family-friendly work policies such as paid medical leave and predictable hours, and investing in human capital through a sound education system, all the way from pre-K through college.”

To read more CHN analysis about the GOP anti-poverty plan, please visit CHN’s [Voices for Human Needs blog](#).

On Thursday, June 16, the Coalition on Human Needs will host a panel discussion entitled “What Works - - and What *Doesn’t* – to Reduce Poverty and Expand Opportunity.” The event will take place at 1 p.m. ET Thursday, June 16th in the Capitol Visitors Center, Gabe Zimmerman Room (HVC 215). The event will be live-streamed nationwide, and is open to the media. To register, click [here](#).

The event is sponsored by the Coalition on Human Needs and cosponsored by the Center for American Progress, Center for Law and Social Policy, Food Research & Action Center, National Council of La Raza, National Low Income Housing Coalition and RESULTS.

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The Coalition on Human Needs (CHN) is an alliance of national organizations working together to promote public policies which address the needs of low-income and other vulnerable populations. The Coalition's members include service providers and faith groups, civil rights, religious, labor and professional organizations and those concerned with the well-being of children, women, the elderly and people with disabilities. For more information please visit www.chn.org.