



INCOME SECURITY

A BUDGET THAT WORKS FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES

Building strong families requires a set of comprehensive supports that are mutually reinforcing. The health coverage now available through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Medicaid is vital to millions of people—and eliminating it would have a devastating impact on both parents' and children's ability to succeed. Securing women's reproductive rights is critical not only for women's health but also for the health of their children and the economic security of their families. Programs that provide food, housing, and other essentials can be the lifeline that helps families pull themselves into the middle class—but cuts to these programs can push families into poverty. No single policy in isolation can succeed if the other policies essential to families' success are undermined.

Achieving effective, comprehensive supports for women and their families starts with building a federal budget that works for them. A budget that promotes equality and expands opportunity; that supports fair treatment for women in the workplace and improves job quality for all workers; that increases access to high-quality child care, promotes paid family and medical leave, and protects health care coverage for mothers and children. A budget should prioritize helping struggling families escape poverty, not helping giant corporations avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

To that end, there are three core principles that are essential for the federal budget for fiscal year 2018:

1. Prioritize vulnerable women and families.

The budget must not increase poverty or exacerbate hardship for families struggling to make ends meet; indeed, past deficit-reduction plans have not only prioritized the needs of low-income people but have also included initiatives to reduce poverty.¹ This principle is particularly important to women, who are more likely than men to be poor at all stages of their lives due to ongoing employment discrimination, overrepresentation in low-wage jobs, and greater responsibilities for unpaid caregiving. As a result, women and their families especially must be able to turn to federal programs and agencies to protect their health, obtain quality child care and higher education, and help them meet their basic needs during difficult times and as they age.²

Protecting vital programs and agencies entails not only ensuring their funding streams are sufficient to meet the needs of women and families, but also their funding structures. For example, programs like Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/food stamps) that currently are designed to serve all eligible people must not be converted into a per capita cap or block grant structure that, over time, would severely curtail the number of families served, the benefits provided, or both.³ And there should not be riders in the budget process that that would restrict access to services and care.



2. Expand economic opportunity for everyone.

Investments in both physical infrastructure and human capital—such as early childhood development, child care, education, health care, and job training—would both create jobs for workers who need them now and contribute to long-term economic growth. And a major federal investment to provide all families who need it with affordable, high-quality child care would both improve job prospects for millions of parents who need child care to go to work and ensure that children are in safe and healthy environments where they can learn and thrive.

3. Secure new revenue from those with the greatest ability to contribute.

Substantial new revenue is essential to achieve any measure of balance in overall deficit reduction and to support needed

investments. Today, many large and profitable corporations do not pay any federal income taxes at all,⁴ while millionaires continue to benefit from numerous loopholes and preferences in the tax code. Additional measures should secure considerable new revenue from the individuals and corporations with the greatest ability to contribute,⁵ putting the nation on a more sustainable fiscal path while supporting the investments our economy needs and protecting programs and services that women and their families depend on.

The most recent House-passed budget resolution calls for lowering income tax rates for the wealthy and shielding offshore corporate profits from taxation while achieving 62 percent of its spending reductions from cuts to programs that serve low- and moderate income people.⁶ This plan—and any others that protect or enhance tax breaks for the wealthy and corporations at the expense of the nation's most vulnerable—should not serve as a model going forward.

- 1 Sophie Feldman & Melissa Boteach, Ctr. for Am. Progress, Timeline: Cutting Poverty and the Federal Deficit Is Possible (Aug. 2012), available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/news/2012/08/15/12021/timeline-cutting-poverty-and-the-federal-deficit-is-possible/>.
- 2 See Katherine Gallagher Robbins & Julie Vogtman, Nat'l Women's Law Ctr., Cutting Programs for Low-Income People Especially Hurts Women and Their Families (Feb. 2015), available at http://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/lowincomefactsheet_february2015.pdf.
- 3 See, e.g., David Reich et al., Ctr. on Budget & Policy Priorities (CBPP), Block-Granting Low-Income Programs Leads to Large Funding Declines Over Time, History Shows (Feb. 2017), available at <http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2-22-17bud.pdf>.
- 4 See generally Citizens for Tax Justice, The Sorry State of Corporate Taxes (Feb. 2014), available at <http://ctj.org/corporatetaxdodgers/>.
- 5 See, e.g., Americans for Tax Fairness, Next Steps Toward Tax Fairness: Options for Closing Loopholes for the Richest 2% and Big Corporations (Feb. 2013), available at <http://www.chn.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ATFNextStepsFinal2-15-13.pdf>.
- 6 Richard Kogan & Isaac Shapiro, Ctr. on Budget & Policy Priorities, House GOP Budget Gets 62 Percent of Budget Cuts from Low- and Moderate-Income Programs (Mar. 2016), available at <http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/3-28-16bud.pdf>.

