NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

Justice for Her. Justice for All.

2026 IMPACT REPORT

Two hundred and fifty years ago, America's founders proclaimed a revolutionary ideal: that all people are created equal, endowed with fundamental rights, and entitled to self-governance.

In the time since, millions of communities have been systemically left out of those initial guarantees—and generations of activists, advocates, and everyday people have fought to bring that founding promise of self-determination and equal protection closer to reality. For women. For people of color. For LGBTQIA+ people. For the indigenous communities who called this continent home for centuries before colonizers arrived. And for the immigrants who have enriched our nation since its founding.

For more than half a century, the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) has led that fight. We've advocated in the courts, in Congress, and in our culture, driven by the fundamental belief that gender justice is at the foundation of a strong democracy, a fair economy, and an inclusive society.

This past year, the Trump-Vance administration moved with breathtaking speed to reverse decades of progress. Women were denied emergency abortion care while their health and lives hung in the balance. Transgender athletes faced vicious public attacks simply because they played the sports they love. Foundational protections against sex discrimination and harassment in the workplace were overturned. The administration dismantled critical funding streams, threatening the health care, food assistance, and lifesaving services on which millions of women and families depend.

And yet, despite every attempt to send our country lurching backward, NWLC kept marching forward. We sued to restore the abortion access the administration had stripped away. Through the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund, we supported people confronting sexual harassment and retaliation at work. We defended the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ people. And we did it in solidarity with extraordinary activists, advocates, attorneys, and elected officials.

No two days looked the same. No two days felt the same. But through every heartbreak and every breakthrough, one thing remained constant: you, our supporters.

Because of our donors, Leadership Advisory Committee members, and indispensable pro bono partners, we have had the resources to meet this moment with the urgency and weight it deserves. Your generosity gives us the capacity to act. Your resolve strengthens our own. And your faith in our purpose inspires us to think bigger, to move from hope to actionable plans to combat this administration's harms, and then to go even further, imagining and building a better, brighter future.

The United States of America's 250th year may be remembered for its contradictions. But it will also be remembered as the year women and girls refused to back down and instead fought, every single day, to achieve our country's promise.

Thank you to our community of supporters who make this work possible.

BY THE NUMBERS

NWLC launched Project Defiance, our most ambitious fundraising effort yet. **This $100+ million campaign** will equip NWLC to continue leading our movement through new attacks—and help NWLC expand our work to defend and protect the rights and freedoms of women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ people.

Every dollar raised has helped NWLC litigate, legislate, and educate—reaching more people, in more places, than ever before.

This year alone, our impact so far includes:

18

Eighteen amicus briefs and lawsuits filed or joined

20

More than 20 appearances before state and local legislatures (plus three testimonies before Congress)

1M

One million views of our online resources and materials

5,900

More than 5,900 media mentions, generating a total reach of 1.92 billion

OUR BODIES

PROTECTING ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE CARE, ROOTING OUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Every freedom begins with freedom over our bodies. Whether in the doctor's office, the home, or the workplace, women and girls have the right to be physically safe and to make fundamental decisions about their own lives—decisions that empower them to lead fulfilling lives.

And yet, despite that—or perhaps because of it—extremist elected officials across state houses and in Congress are focused on controlling and limiting women's choices over their own bodies. Over the past year, the Trump-Vance administration has stripped access to abortion services, rolled back protections for victims of sexual harassment, and made it even more difficult for survivors of gender-based violence to seek the supports they deserve.

NWLC countered this coercive campaign of control using every legal tool at our disposal.

In the aftermath of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, we established—and continue to invest in—our Abortion Access Legal Defense Fund, which helps alleviate legal costs for patients, providers, and supporters. Over the past year, it has received requests for financial assistance from people nationwide—and funded attorneys representing clients in federal and state courts, as well as in administrative proceedings. These lawyers not only defend clients, they also sue proactively when patients, providers, or supporters are harmed.

NWLC went to court to defend access to contraception. In March, we weighed in with a federal appeals court to defend the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive coverage requirement, which guarantees insurance coverage of birth control at no additional cost—helping millions of people obtain and use contraceptives more consistently and effectively. However, the current administration still wants to allow any employer to refuse to comply with the law. So we worked alongside Americans United for Separation of Church and State—and were joined by more than 60 other civil rights and gender justice organizations—to file an amicus brief, challenging the administration and the protecting the health and equality of women and others who can become pregnant.

NWLC continued to invest in the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund, the only nationwide fund dedicated to supporting people facing sexual harassment and retaliation in the workplace. Between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026, we connected 770 individuals who had experienced sex discrimination with legal help. Nearly a third had faced workplace sex harassment and retaliation; others had been met with it at school, and/or when accessing healthcare. We awarded funding to 53 new legal matters in 2025 and 2026—bringing our total to 462 matters funded since the launch of the Legal Defense Fund in 2018. And we helped individuals share their stories, crafting outreach and educational resources to ensure students and workers facing sex harassment fully understand their rights. Through our campaign, *The Silence Breakers*, we put those survivors, and the attorneys who advocated for them, front and center—reminding every survivor that they are not alone. And throughout the year, we filed a string of amicus briefs defending the Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Act, ensuring that workers who bring

related claims of discrimination and retaliation alongside harassment claims can have their full day in court.

What's more, in partnership with Jobs With Justice, we released the Our Bodies, Our Labor toolkit—because abortion rights are workers' rights. Having the freedom to decide if and when to have children is inseparable from the freedom to make sound decisions about one's livelihood. The toolkit offers guidance to union members, labor leaders, and worker-justice organizations who want to engage in the fight for abortion access and support workers who need abortion care.

Finally, when the Trump-Vance administration tried to unlawfully gatekeep the federal funding that keeps emergency shelters, counseling, and legal assistance running, we went to court on behalf of 25 state organizations supporting survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. We challenged new requirements that would force these organizations to turn their backs on undocumented immigrants, transgender survivors, and the broader community—and we are winning, as evidenced by courts blocking these new conditions on federal funds.

LITIGATION SPOTLIGHT

Minority Veterans of America v. Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Last year, the Trump-Vance administration launched a draconian attack on reproductive freedom, imposing the strictest abortion ban in any federal program on military veterans and their families. Under the new policy, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) barred abortion care even in cases of rape, incest, or serious threats to a pregnant person's health.

This rollback placed hundreds of thousands of people in jeopardy, restricting their options for reproductive care and compounding the health challenges they already face. Veterans often delay starting families until after their service; many suffer from service-related injuries, chronic illnesses, toxic exposures, and psychological trauma that can complicate pregnancy and make abortion care necessary. They also are at disproportionately high risk of sexual assault.

The administration knew all of this. And it chose cruelty anyway—with no regard for veterans' physical health, mental well-being, lives, or livelihoods.

But NWLC didn't waste a second when it came to protecting those who protect us.

On behalf of Minority Veterans of America, we sued to restore access to these essential reproductive services—and to defend veterans' fundamental right to make their own decisions about their bodies.

This case is bigger than one policy. Even as a candidate, Donald Trump repeatedly and publicly promised that his administration would not impose federal restrictions on abortion. Clearly, that was a blatant lie—and as the VA's policy shows, the administration will go to any lengths and test out any strategy to rip away women's autonomy. In response, NWLC is sending a clear message:

We will hold this administration accountable at every turn—and not rest until every person is in control of their own health.

OUR RIGHTS

SAFEGUARDING DEMOCRACY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, AND THE RULE OF LAW

The right to vote, to enjoy equal opportunity at work, to live free from discrimination, to participate fully in our democracy—these are not abstract legal principles.

They are life-changing—and indeed, sometimes lifesaving—guarantees. Yet, over the past year, the current administration went after nearly all of them: weakening long-standing civil rights protections; attacking the basic values of diversity, equity, and inclusion and any efforts to advance them; and making it harder for women, LGBTQIA+ people, people of color, immigrants, and those in other marginalized communities to thrive—or even participate—in American life.

Rights are only as powerful as our willingness to defend them, and NWLC was up to the task. When a group of voters sued to strike down Louisiana's congressional map—which included a second majority-Black district, as the Voting Rights Act required—we joined an amicus brief in Louisiana v. Callais to defend it. We did so because discriminatory voting practices—and in particular, attempts to dilute the voting power of Black women—are, on their own, an assault on democracy. But we also did so because attacks like this one open the door more broadly to further assaults on reproductive rights, workplace protections, and basic-needs programs for women. In April 2026, the Supreme Court ruled 6–3 against the Voting Rights Act, gutting one of the most important civil rights protections of our time. But the fight is not over: We will continue working to defend and expand the right to vote, restoring the strength of our multiracial democracy.

Louisiana v. Callais reminds us that voting rights are, and always have been, inseparable from gender justice. Much of the progress we've made on the latter over the past several decades traces directly back to expanded voting power for Black voters. As that progress comes under assault—through discriminatory redistricting, unnecessary voter ID laws, and polling place closures concentrated in underrepresented city centers—NWLC continues to research, educate, and advocate for a democracy that works for everyone.

We also fought back against the administration's assault on workplace protections. When the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) adopted a policy of refusing to enforce federal workplace protections for transgender workers, we joined Democracy Forward to represent Maryland legal services provider FreeState Justice in challenging the agency's unlawful Trans Exclusion Policy. Together, we argued that the EEOC cannot simply close its doors to charges brought by transgender workers and we published resources and information about what civil rights law actually requires. What's more, in July 2026, NWLC and our law firm partner Mehri & Skalet filed an amicus brief in Crowther & Joseph v. Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, urging the Supreme Court to affirm that school employees—not just students—have a right under Title IX to sue in court when they face sex discrimination on the job.

As co-lead of the 75 Million Project, a campaign seeking to ensure fair workplaces for the 75 million women in the U.S. workforce, we also issued a report laying out the ways in which

the Trump-Vance administration targeted and weakened longstanding workplace protections during its first year in office. And, we organized in opposition to a wave of Department of Labor rules that would strip away basic wage and safety protections from home care workers, tipped workers, and apprentices. We went on the offensive, too, rallying support in Congress for a Working Women's Bill of Rights—while celebrating the pay transparency protections won in Virginia last year, which took effect in July 2026.

In addition to pursuing gender justice at the federal level, we fought for it at the state level. In 2023, we helped launch the State Gender Policy Collective, uniting state policymakers and advocates working to advance gender justice in communities across the country. Through webinars, newsletters, opportunities to collaborate and strategize, and a Resource Hub of policy briefs, sample testimony, talking points, and state-by-state data, the collective helps state legislators learn from one another and move faster, together. These leaders are on the ground opposing abortion bans, defending LGBTQIA+ people, and advancing paid leave, pay transparency, and Black maternal health policies. To further support them we launched a fellowship program, connecting ten state legislators and ten state advocates through an 18-month program supported by NWLC's policy and research expertise.

Finally, more than a century after the ratification of the 19th Amendment, we put forward a public education piece that highlighted the continued struggle for equal suffrage. "The 19th Amendment Is Under Attack, and Not Every Woman Has an Equal Right to Vote," became one of our highest-performing public-facing content pieces—a reminder that we can celebrate progress and stay fiercely committed to the work still ahead.

POLICY SPOTLIGHT

The SAVE America Act

In February, the United States House of Representatives passed the SAVE America Act: a sweeping voter-suppression bill that, if enacted, would make it significantly harder for millions of eligible citizens to participate in our democracy.

President Trump said that this bill was his top legislative priority, calling it a "simple voter ID measure." In fact, it would greatly expand the federal government's ability to interfere in elections—while requiring voters to provide proof of citizenship to register to vote. Today, fewer than half of the people living in the United States have a passport, while millions have names that don't match the one on their birth certificate.

NWLC immediately led a multi-faceted opposition, calling out the bill for what it was: a blatantly undemocratic effort to curb voting rights for women, people of color, students, and other targeted groups. The bill would particularly impact anyone who has changed their name, from trans people to the 69 million married women who have taken a spouse's last name.

Our online explainer on how the SAVE America Act could disenfranchise those people was viewed more than 36,000 times, and our advocacy was featured in Forbes—twice. We made the case in person, too: at a rally outside the Supreme Court for Louisiana v. Callais and in an address at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. We also briefed and mobilized fellow organizations, including the Gender Equity Coalition, the Women's Disinformation Defense Project, and MomsRising to reach out to Congress and their local governments—so that, as long as the administration keeps pushing for the SAVE Act to be rammed through, we have a far bigger community pushing back.

OUR FAMILIES

SUPPORTING THE CARE ECONOMY AND PROMOTING ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR ALL FAMILIES

Everyone deserves the basics, and families thrive when they can count on them: affordable, quality child care; a fair wage; paid time away from work when a baby arrives or a loved one gets sick; and support caring for aging parents and disabled family members.

And yet, every one of these fundamental needs remains out of reach for many, many people living in the United States.

Child care costs have so outpaced inflation that a family now needs to earn more than $180,000 a year to comfortably afford infant care. Compounding the problem, nearly three-quarters of workers do not have access to paid family leave through their employer. Immigrant families no longer see child care centers and schools as safe, as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents have raided the very sites where children are supposed to be most protected. And the care workers who make all

other work possible—including early educators, home health aides, and certified nursing assistants, the majority of whom are Black, Latina, and immigrant women—are paid poverty wages for their labor.

While claiming to champion American families, the current administration spent the past year undermining them. NWLC has met their empty slogans with the facts—and countered their broken promises with real action.

We tracked and laid bare the administration's sustained campaign against Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). When Senators Cassidy and Tuberville introduced draft legislation that would have shortened children's eligibility windows, banned U.S. citizen children with immigrant parents from receiving subsidies, and mandated costly new surveillance of child care providers, we led a coalition of more than 160 organizations from all 50 states demanding the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee reject it outright. We also testified before the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Education and Workforce—and the Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee—to detail the administration's attacks on the child care system and make the case for robust, sustained investment. And we launched the *Robbing Us* campaign to tally what billionaire tax cuts are costing working families: an average of $1,200 per year per family, until 2034—all while the wealthiest gain an average of $13,600 a year during that same period.

Underpinning the administration's attacks on care is the broader, even more insidious agenda of pronatalism—and we ensured the public knew the truth about it. In 2026, we published a brief detailing how the movement behind Project 2025 is working to coerce women into marriage and childbearing under the guise of being "pro-family," while stripping away the child care, birth control and abortion care, and access to higher education that would actually help women, and the families who depend on them, thrive.

Finally, we sounded the alarm on the One Big Beautiful Bill Act's Medicaid cuts, which are gutting home and community-based services that seniors, disabled people, and family caregivers depend on. Our report detailing how the law is devastating women's health articulated the sky-high stakes: catastrophic coverage loss for millions, closures of health care centers, and older women and women with chronic conditions being forced to choose between affording their medical care and paying rent.

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Hard Work Is Not Enough

In every state across the country, women comprise the majority—often the vast majority—of child care workers, home health aides, personal care aides, food service workers, and other essential workers whose labor keeps our families, communities, and economy afloat.

And yet, despite the critical nature of their work and the grueling toll it takes, these women are undervalued, underpaid, and unable to afford life in the United States today.

Our newest report, Hard Work Is Not Enough: Women in Low-Paid Jobs, surveys the economic realities of women in the 40 lowest-paid jobs across the country, with a focus on women of color and women supporting children, who face the highest risk of instability. Indeed, we found that women make up 61 percent of the underpaid workforce and one-third of women in low-paid jobs live near or below the poverty line.

For these women and their families, a broken-down car is a financial catastrophe; an unexpected medical expense can mean the difference between the kids eating dinner and going to bed hungry. This thin line between financial stability and collapse points to the obscenity at the heart of our economy: The workers we call essential are treated as disposable, valued only for the wealth they create but will never share in.

Shedding light on these realities is only the first step. With this research in hand, NWLC is helping craft and advance the policies women in low-paid jobs need most: higher wages, stronger worker protections, affordable care, and an economy that values women's labor as much as it depends on it—ensuring every family has a chance to thrive.

OUR FUTURES

HELPING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL GET A FAIR SHOT—ON THE JOB, ON CAMPUS, AND ON THE FIELD

Our future is being shaped by fights happening right now: fights over who gets paid, who gets opportunity, and who gets to play. The Trump-Vance administration has waged both a legal battle and a culture war on all three, leaving the future of the next generation hanging in the balance. But in every field—including the playing fields themselves—NWLC rose up and pushed back.

While some organizations have reneged on their commitments to the core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, we've held strong—and empowered others to do the same. In April 2026, we joined the Legal Defense Fund and Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law to draft the Foundational Values for Higher Education compact, calling on colleges and universities to publicly recommit to equity and academic freedom in the face of federal pressure to dismantle both. We also came to the defense of Women's and Gender Studies programs—including through our report, Making the Case: Gender-Conscious Programs in Higher Ed, which provides student organizers, academic chairs, and Title IX coordinators with the legal frameworks necessary to preserve these majors and courses.

That effort didn't stop at the campus gates; we took it to workplaces too. Chicago Women in Trades (CWIT) helps women—about 70 percent of whom are Black and Latina—build careers in the skilled trades. Last year, when the Trump-Vance administration moved to terminate equity-related federal grants, like the ones that fund CWIT's life-changing work, we sued—and we won. That effort blocked the Department of Labor from threatening to withhold federal funds to coerce organizations to abandon all efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. When the Department of Labor appealed the decision, we successfully defended the win. And when the administration later tried again to get the ruling thrown out, we beat back that effort, too, and kept the protections standing.

The administration has bragged endlessly about a booming economy and rising wages. The numbers, however, reveal a far different story, especially for women. And we've helped share that story far and wide. We released a new analysis showing that despite a strong labor market, poverty got worse for the women most likely to be left behind—including Black women, along with women ages 65 and older—while nearly two in five working-age women living in poverty were fully employed.

Finally, our fights for the future are rooted in our core belief in dignity and decency for all. That belief drives our work to foster inclusion and level the playing field—for all athletes.

This past year, NWLC filed amicus briefs in *Little v. Hecox and West Virginia v. B.P.J.*, the two Supreme Court cases testing whether states can bar transgender girls from school sports. We argued these bans rely on and revive the same stereotypes about women's athletic inferiority that Title IX was written to dismantle—and that sex "verification" schemes threaten every girl who doesn't fit a narrow idea of femininity.

On June 30, 2026, the Supreme Court ruled 6–3 against the students, holding the bans constitutional. But we're not stopping: Through our One for All campaign, coaches, athletes, and supporters are taking a public pledge to reject the fearmongering behind these bans and commit to helping every kid play, compete, and belong in sports. And we'll continue to spread the truth: The real threat to women's sports isn't trans women, but gaps in wages and media coverage, funding and resource inequities, rampant harassment and abuse, and cuts to Title IX promoted by the very administration posing as a champion of women's sports.

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LITIGATION SPOTLIGHT

Yvonne Schulman v. Zoetis

In 2020, Dr. Yvonne Schulman, a Harvard-educated veterinarian from New Hampshire, was hired by Zoetis Reference Labs as an animal pathologist. With more than two decades of experience under her belt, Dr. Schulman was already an established expert in her field—and was more senior than many of her male colleagues.

Dr. Schulman had a genuine passion for animal health and cared deeply about advancing the mission of the lab; she was not in her line of work for the money. However, in 2021, Dr. Schulman discovered she was being paid significantly less than two male colleagues with the exact same title—despite handling roughly 25 more cases per day. Specifically, Dr. Schulman's base salary was approximately $105,000 lower than that of a colleague she outranked by six years—and $70,000 lower than a colleague she outranked by 19 years.

Dr. Schulman raised the disparity with the human resources department and company leadership, giving Zoetis the opportunity to correct an indefensible injustice. The company refused.

So she sued—and alongside our colleagues at Kakalec Law PLLC and Harrison, Harrison & Associates, NWLC was proud to represent her. After a four-year legal battle, we finally secured a settlement on Dr. Schulman's behalf in June 2026.

This win was a triumph for Dr. Schulman. It was also a beacon of hope for workers across the country contemplating similar legal action—proving that every woman who challenges gender-based discrimination makes it harder for the next employer to get away with it.

As Dr. Schulman put it: "No one should be paid less because of their gender. I hope this encourages others who are unfairly paid less to speak up and fight back."

THANK YOU

Our fight for gender justice thrives thanks to the unwavering support of our donors and philanthropic partners. Over the past year, your contributions have not only sustained our programmatic and legal advocacy but also empowered us to respond swiftly and effectively to crises as they emerge.

Your generosity has fueled landmark legal victories, powerful policy changes, and seismic shifts in culture on behalf of women and girls everywhere.

Thank you.

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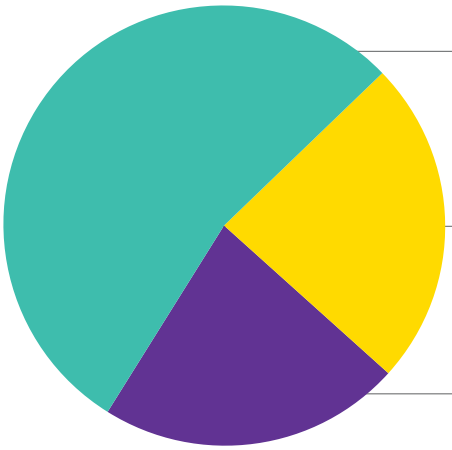
FY26 REVENUE



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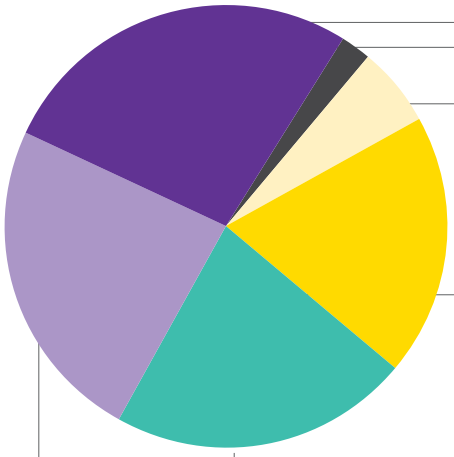

FY26 EXPENSES
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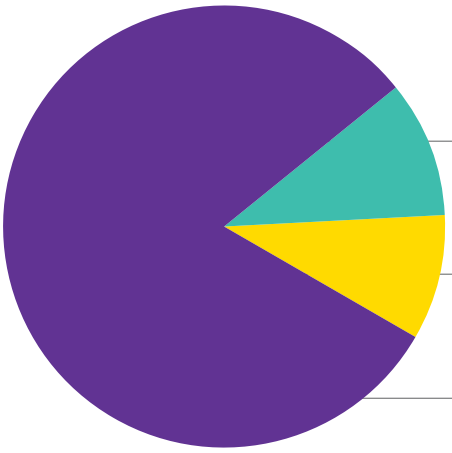

Figures are from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.

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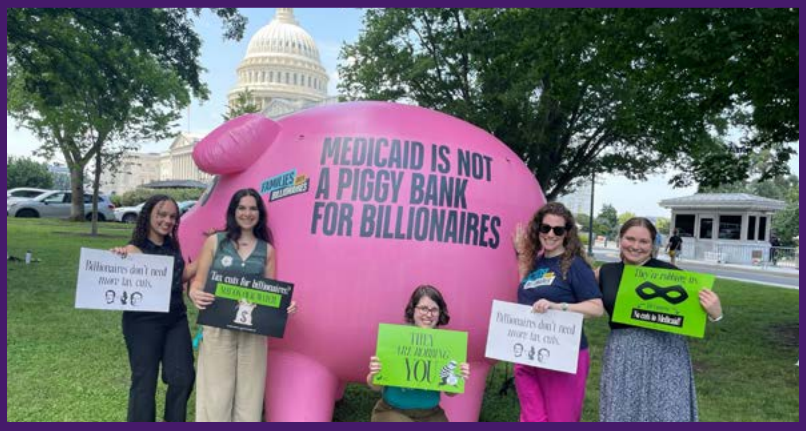
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