

Picking middle-class pockets to deliver for donors

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If you've somehow escaped the news since the last presidential election and just heard that the Republican-controlled Congress, with President Trump's full-throated support, has voted to raise taxes on middle-class families; penalize students, their teachers and their communities; and gut Medicare and otherwise punish sick Americans—all to give big business and billionaires a tax break—you're probably wondering what happened to candidate Trump, who promised to help the middle class and drain the swamp.

Republicans' claim that their tax overhaul is good for middle-class and working Americans is a sham. The clear winners are the already wealthy and powerful, who will get huge tax breaks and perks, like a private jet deduction, for example. Independent analyses show a long list of Americans who could lose under the GOP tax plan: households earning \$10,000 to \$75,000, who will pay more in taxes over the next decade; homeowners, who will lose their mortgage interest deduction; educators, who count on a deduction to defray purchases for their classrooms; people with long-term or chronic illnesses, who will no longer be able to deduct their medical expenses; 13 million people who will no longer have health insurance; student loan borrowers, who will lose the deduction for student loan interest or tuition assistance; union members, who won't be able to deduct their union dues; and states and local communities that, because of the loss of the state and local tax deduction, won't be able to adequately fund public services, including public schools and first responders.

GOP leaders argue that their lavish tax giveaways to corporations and the very wealthy will spur economic growth and job creation—in other words, that the benefits will trickle down to other Americans. Kansas' experiment with trickle-down economics decimated state revenues, exploded the deficit and triggered painful spending cuts. Kansans have since reinstated many of the taxes that had been cut with such disastrous effects. Indeed, at a forum with Gary Cohn, Trump's chief economic adviser, when CEOs were asked if companies would invest more and raise wages for workers if the GOP tax plans went through, few raised their hands.

A new Quinnipiac poll shows that Americans get it. A majority of Americans disapprove of the GOP tax plans and believe that the wealthy—not

the middle class—will benefit. They're right: The top 1 percent of earners would enjoy 80 percent of the tax cuts under the GOP plans, according to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center. One analysis found that the money Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and her family would receive from just one of their tax breaks could pay more than 6,000 teachers. And a news report concluded that President Trump and his family could save more than \$1 billion.

So why would lawmakers put their large contributors over their constituents? Rep.

The clear winners in the GOP tax plan are the already wealthy and powerful.

Chris Collins (R-N.Y.) admitted who this bill is really for: "My donors are basically saying, 'Get it done or don't ever call me again.'"

The draconian effects of this law will last for decades. Consider the impact on public education. Nationally, state income and sales taxes fund 46 percent of public education, and local property taxes contribute an additional 45 percent. Under the Republican plans, nearly 29 million households will no longer be able to deduct these taxes, resulting in double taxation and reduced revenues for localities. This will hit ordinary Americans in their wallets and squeeze

funds for public education and other important public services. And while the middle class will no longer be able to deduct state and local taxes, corporations will maintain this deduction.

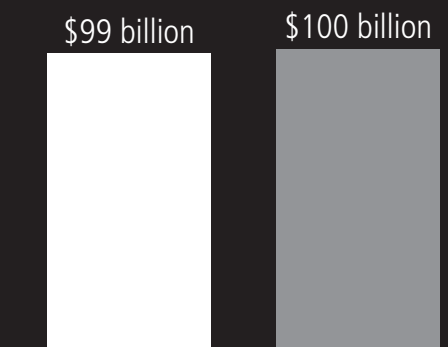
These proposals will affect every American. Voters should be asking their representatives: Why craft such consequential plans in secret? Why rush to ram them through without regular order or adequate hearings, scrutiny, debate or time for public comment? Why devise a scheme to pass such sweeping changes unilaterally, without the need for a single vote from the Democratic Party,

whose members, like those in the GOP, were elected to represent the needs and interests of their constituents? What happened to the motto of the Republican Party, the party of Lincoln: "of the people, by the people and for the people"?

The House has passed an unfair, heartless tax bill, without the votes of the Democrats and nine Republicans who want fair taxation and can see that this bill isn't it. It's now up to the Senate, which is also planning to steamroll the middle class to help the donor class. If this wealth redistribution bothers you, there is still time to make your voice heard.

HOUSEHOLDS WITH TAX INCREASES UNDER HOUSE TAX PLAN PAY FOR TAX CUTS FOR TOP 1 PERCENT

- Total tax increase on all households seeing a tax increase, 2027
- Total tax cut for top 1 percent of households getting a tax cut, 2027



BASED ON INFORMATION FROM CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

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