

Opposing Trump's "moral chaos," People's Budget offers roadmap for resistance ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) on Tuesday unveiled its "People's Budget," offering a vision of economic equality and fairness that comes in sharp contrast to the Trump administration's "slash-and-burn approach to governing based on ideological extremism."

The People's Budget: A Roadmap for the Resistance (pdf) includes a \$2 trillion infrastructure investment; closes corporate tax loopholes; ensures families don't pay more than 10 percent of their income for childcare; and supports progressive measures such as a minimum wage increase, clean energy expansion, and debt-free college. Bottom line, the caucus said Tuesday, the document "puts political and economic power back in the hands of the people."

It boasts the support of dozens of advocacy organizations, and the Economic Policy Institute's (EPI) analysis, also released Tuesday, says the budget would increase economic and employment growth, boosting GDP by 2 percent and employment by 2.4 million jobs in the near term.

Pointing to one specific proposal, EPI's Hunter Blair said: "The People's Budget offers a childcare and early childhood education solution that will not only ease family life in this country, but will also boost the wages of childcare workers. Because this budget invests about one trillion dollars in childcare, lower income families will have the same opportunities as wealthier families."

Members of the CPC contrasted the document's priorities with those of President Donald Trump and his corporate cabinet.

"It's one thing to oppose President Trump and expose his broken promises to workers, but it's also important to lay out a positive path forward," said Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Wis.). "The Congressional Progressive Caucus's budget is a plan to actually help working Americans who have felt left behind by an economy rigged against them. Our budget is a roadmap for the resistance, investing in the progressive priorities and economic, kitchen-table issues that matter to real people: infrastructure to create jobs; education to help our kids reach their full potential; and access to affordable healthcare."

It strongly opposes what Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-N.J.) described as "President Trump's disgraceful budget and unworkable tax proposals [that] are merely a handout to the wealthy at the expense of hardworking families and vulnerable communities."

"Our nation cannot succumb to such dangerous and divisive ideals," she said. "As bad as it may be, the Trump budget did not develop in a vacuum; it ultimately reflects a failed and untenable conservative vision for the nation that has only succeeded in widening economic inequality, stagnating wages for American workers, and cutting social safety net programs."

The CPC budget notably leaves Social Security alone—recognizing, as advocate Nancy Altman wrote Tuesday, that the safety net program "has no place in the general budget of the United States."

The alternative budget does declare:

With the nation facing a looming retirement income crisis, expanding Social Security will help ensure that every American can retire with security and dignity. Right now, Social Security benefits average just around \$16,080 a year for retired workers. The People's Budget supports increasing Social Security's modest benefits separate and apart from budget discussions, because Social Security does not add a penny to the deficit and, by law, is not to be counted as part of the federal budget.

"Recognizing Social Security for the solution that it is while making clear that its funds are dedicated exclusively to the sole purpose of funding earned benefits (and the associated administrative costs) should not be a novel position," wrote Altman, who is president of Social Security Works. "The Congressional Progressive Caucus is to be applauded for seeing this when other politicians don't. The CPC deserves our gratitude. And the People's Budget deserves our support."

Meanwhile, as Trump tries to claim victory on a "down payment" for his border wall he says is tucked into the recent government funding deal, the CPC budget prohibits funding for:

- construction of any border wall;
- any immigration policies which seek to ban people from entering the U.S. because of their religion;
- immigration raids at “sensitive locations,” including schools, religious institutions, courthouses, domestic violence shelters, healthcare facilities, and workplaces with active disputes between workers and management; and
- family detention centers that “act as a misguided effort to deter Central American families and children fleeing violence from coming to the United States.”

On this front and on many others, said Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) “the Progressive Caucus budget is the answer to the moral chaos of the administration.”

Learn more under the hashtag #PeoplesBudget

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