

CUTTING PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN TO PAY FOR TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHY

The president has tasked the House and Senate Majority with delivering on his agenda to extend the 2017 tax cuts for the **highest income earners** (which expire at the end of the year) and simultaneously cut spending.

Congressional Action

In order to deliver on the president's sprawling goals, the House and Senate Leadership are using a legislative mechanism called "reconciliation." This process allows them to pass a bill in the Senate with a simple majority of only 51 votes, rather than the usual 60 votes (which would be needed to overcome a Democratic **filibuster**).

Over the coming weeks and months, negotiations will take place within and between the House and Senate to agree on what a final package for reconciliation will look like. The House has already decided to cut mandatory spending in exchange for tax cut extensions. **Mandatory spending** is funding that is required by law for such programs as Medicaid, food stamps (SNAP), Social Security, Medicare and unemployment insurance and is not subject to the annual congressional funding process. Mandatory spending accounts for roughly 2/3 of the total federal budget and therefore is the pot of money that congress is targeting in order to pass its revenue-reducing tax cuts.

Because Social Security and discretionary spending are off-limits in reconciliation, the congressional Majority's planned cuts include mandatory spending for **Medicaid**, the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**, the **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** program and the **Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)**. These 4 programs—Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and SSBG—represent close to half of all investments in children ages 0 to 3 and nearly one-third of all investments in children, making it seemingly inevitable that this reconciliation package will exacerbate child poverty and hunger and strip healthcare and essential assistance from low-income families with children, particularly infants and toddlers, all around the country.

Timing

While the timing for reconciliation is fluid, the House is currently planning to bring its bill to the House Floor the week before Memorial Day, pass it and send it over to the Senate. After Senate passage the goal for final passage by both chambers is July 4th.

Kids are not alright

Rather than cutting programs that help children, we should be expanding them. Children already receive far less than their **fair share** of the federal budget and they are experiencing more challenges than ever. **Infant** and child mortality is rising, as is **child poverty**. **Uninsured rates** for children are growing, their **mental health** needs are soaring and **hunger** and **homelessness** is surging. Preventable diseases are back with a vengeance, immigrant children are living in fear and child abuse rates are up. These are not niche or isolated problems. These are the foundational issues of child development going unmet and our nation's leaders choosing to turn a blind eye.

Take Action

1. Please join us in calling on our elected officials to prioritize the wellbeing of children.
2. Email your **Senators** and **Representative** to urge them to reject damaging cuts and structural changes being imposed for Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).
3. Let them know you want them to protect investments for children during the reconciliation process and going forward.
4. Share your efforts with your networks and ask others to join you.