



May 30, 2017 5:50 AM Age: 2 yrs

A Budget in Search of a Soul

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Life begins, it does not end at birth.

Someone needs to pass that memo on to those socially conservative right-to-lifers who at the same time endorse the **Trump Administration's** latest Federal Fiscal Year budget proposal.

These are the folks who believe that the **United States** should embrace a **?culture of life.?** They support that belief by wanting to deny people access to birth control, as well as abortions under any circumstances.

So, the theory must go, let's bring as many children into the world as we can. At the same time let's balance the Federal budget by reducing their access to health care, childhood education, nutritional meals, higher education loans, decent housing, as well as their parents ability to provide for them ...and much more.

In short, let's take away every opportunity for them to thrive, from the time they are born to their last dying day, and hope the best for them. Now that's really **Christian** of us!

Here are just a few proposed Trump administration budget numbers to chew on:



- About **9 million low-income kids** depend on coverage from the **Children's Health Insurance Program ("CHIP")**. That would change dramatically if **Congress** passes the 20 percent cut to CHIP that the Trump budget currently calls for over the next two years

- If passed as is, the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP")**, or the familiar food stamps, will be cut by \$191 billion over 10 years. That's about a 25% cut on top of \$40.4 billion in cuts to the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit over 10 years -- programs that, along with SNAP, make up much of the US's safety net for low-income kids and their families

- Then there's an additional \$21.6 in cuts to **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families**, or welfare, over 10 years. That's a nearly 13% cut to the program, which has already been cut dramatically since the 1990s. NOTE: one-out-of-five kids in this country already goes to bed hungry at night?this, in the richest nation the world has ever known.

- Trump's budget seeks to slash the **U.S. Department of Education's** roughly \$68 billion budget by \$9 billion, or 13%, targeting popular programs that help districts offer after-school programs, and hire and train teachers.

If the **definition of hypocrisy** is the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform, then those who advocate for a cultural of life but refuse to put their money where their mouths are is a pretense that rivals the suspension of disbelief.

But what makes this budget truly venal is that its proposed **\$1.7 trillion in cuts** to food stamps, children's health insurance, Social Security Disability Insurance and other social safety net programs to "balance the budget" is going towards financing tax cuts to the wealthy.

That's right. This budget has its foundation in the old economic theory that if we give enough money to the rich they will create jobs?and wealth?that will **trickle down** to the rest of us.

This is an economic theory that every **Republican administration** has tried to implement since the days of **Ronald Reagan**?and again and again it has failed. It's a conservative narrative that won't die. If it worked, we'd be awash in good-paying jobs. Instead, the only think that has trickled down to most middle and lower-middle class Americans over the last 30 or 40 years is misery.

Oh, it's not that the theory hasn't worked for the rich.

According to **Forbes**, the 400 wealthiest families in the U.S. have a combined worth of \$2.34 trillion, more wealth than the bottom 61% of the country combined, or a staggering total of 194 million people. And that figure is from 2015. The gap has only widened since then.



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The fundamental questions this budget proposes is: *what kind of a nation do we want to be? Do we truly embrace a cultural of life?* Or is that simply, at worst, a talking point and at best a hope.

Keep in mind that ***hope is not a strategy.***

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