

**To:** Interested Parties  
**From:** Priorities USA  
Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group  
Global Strategy Group  
**Date:** November 17, 2017  
**RE:** New Priorities USA Poll: Republican Tax Plan Spells Electoral Disaster

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## Summary

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The Republican tax proposals currently moving through Congress are more than just bad policy, they are politically toxic for Republicans and will further cement voters' views that Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress are looking out for the interests of the wealthy and big corporations, not the regular people they were elected to represent.

A new, nationwide survey conducted by Priorities USA finds that the lines of messaging for Democrats about the plan will be plentiful and highly effective. These messages are particularly potent reinforcing voters' belief that Republicans aren't looking out for regular people: the proposal's cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, the elimination of medical expense deductions and the creation of new incentives for companies to send jobs overseas all make at least 73 percent of voters feel less favorably about the plan.

Republicans have already done significant damage to their standing on the economy through their attacks on the Affordable Care Act and this tax plan will build on that damage. It gives Democratic candidates a highly effective economic message heading into the midterm elections at a time when the President is historically unpopular, the generic ballot shows a huge disadvantage for Republicans, and Democrats enjoy a sizeable enthusiasm advantage.

## Most Effective Lines of Communication on GOP Tax Plan

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The tax bill provides Democrats with abundant lines of attack on Republicans in 2018. Every single criticism of the plan we tested proved to be an effective message, with some being among the best we've tested on any topic during the Trump presidency. The impact of these messages is to further drive home with voters the fact that Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress are looking out for themselves and their donors and not regular people. While it has not been a large part of the debate around tax reform to this point, the cuts to Medicare and Medicaid that would be triggered under the plan provide perhaps the most effective attack for Democrats.

The most potent messages about the plan:

- “The Republicans in Congress’ plan gives millions of dollars in tax breaks to wealthy Washington politicians like themselves and their special interest donors, while millions of middle class families will see their taxes go up.”
  - **62% say raises MAJOR doubts and 71% raises doubts overall**
  - **This is also the most effective message with swing voters, with 70% saying it raises MAJOR doubts and 79% raises doubts overall.**
- “President Trump and Republicans in Congress’ plan pays for tax cuts to millionaires and wealthy corporations by slashing programs that help middle class families and seniors on fixed incomes. It calls for billions of dollars in cuts to Medicare, a trillion dollars in cuts to Medicaid, and billions more slashed from budgets for education and job training programs.”
  - **62% say raises MAJOR doubts and 71% raises doubts overall**

The most potent facts about the plan:

- “The plan calls for cutting \$473 billion from Medicare and \$1 trillion from Medicaid.”
  - **61% say much less favorable and 73% less favorable over all**
- “The plan will no longer let families make deductions for medical expenses, including for nursing home care.”
  - **61% say much less favorable and 76% less favorable over all**
- “The plan creates a new tax incentive for companies to send jobs overseas.”
  - **60% say much less favorable and 73% less favorable over all**

The more voters hear about the plan the less they like it. Prior to hearing any new messaging about the tax plan, 31 percent of voters support it and 48 percent oppose. The people who have heard some or a lot about it are at 36 percent support and 57 percent oppose. After hearing facts and arguments about the plan, 28 percent of all voters say they support the plan while 61 percent oppose.

In addition to the dramatic increase in opposition to the plan, the generic congressional ballot shifts away from Republicans, moving from a 45 percent to 34 percent advantage for Democrats before messaging to a 50 percent to 33 percent advantage for Democrats after hearing about the tax plan.

### **Republicans Already at a Disadvantage Compared To Democrats**

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Even prior to the House vote on the Republican tax cut plan, Democrats have better standing among voters on the question of who is looking out for them.

Only 18 percent of voters think Republicans in Congress are looking out for the interests of regular people, while 62 percent think they are mainly looking out for the interests of wealthy people and big corporations.

President Trump also fares poorly on these types of questions. Just 29 percent of voters think Trump's economic policies would be good for people like them, marking the lowest number for Trump on this question since he was sworn into office. On the question of whether Trump primarily looks out for regular people or the wealthy and corporations, **59 percent of voters feel he looks out for the wealthy**, up from 49 percent in March. Just 25 percent feel Trump is primarily looking out for regular people.

Any further attacks on the health care system injected into Republican tax reform proposals will exacerbate these vulnerabilities and further degrade voters' confidence in President Trump and congressional Republicans.

### About this Poll

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Global Strategy Group and Garin Hart Yang Research Group conducted a live telephone survey of 1,003 presidential year voters nationwide, from November to 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The results of this survey have a margin of error of +/-3.1%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the electorate are properly represented.