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Opinion

Republican Tax Bill Robs the Poor to Feed the Rich

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act recently passed on a nearly straight party line Republican vote in the U.S. Senate is, like the House-passed bill, a moral abomination. Their enactment would be the death of America's dream for tens of millions of children. The House and Senate bills favor the wealthiest Americans and most powerful corporations over poor and moderate-income children and families — billionaires over poor babies and powerful corporations over poor children. They are evil.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. warned that "America is going to hell if we can't use her vast resources to end poverty and make it possible for all of God's children to have the basic necessities of life." With both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives now having passed extremely unjust tax bills, I must ask — how can 278 political leaders, 51 Senators and 227 House members, act against the best interests of so many in their states and across our nation to line the overstuffed pockets of powerful special interests with government money?

What religious texts do these Members of Congress and those who lobby them read? How did they miss the clear warnings of the prophets and gospels and tenets of every great faith to care for the poor, the sick, the lame and the orphan? Where did they learn that acting as Robin Hood in reverse by denying the poor and powerless child



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the basic survival needs of food and shelter to give to the wealthy and powerful is acceptable?

There are 565 billionaires in the United States — the 400 richest of whom have a combined net worth of \$2.7 trillion. More than 13.2 million

"They will deny poor and moderate-income children and families healthcare, food, housing, child care and other survival assistance

children — 1 in 5 — live in poverty in America. Their families of four make less than \$24,563 a year. More than six million children live in deep poverty, at less than half the poverty level.

A majority of both houses of Congress and the Trump Administration seek policies to reward millionaires and billionaires and non-needy corporations and add nearly \$1.5

trillion — around \$150 billion a year for the next ten years — to our national deficit to do so. And to pay for it, they will deny poor and moderate-income children and families healthcare, food, housing, child care and other survival assistance or help parents get needed jobs at livable wages to support their families.

Consider some of the facts about these tax cut bills:

- Both the Senate and House bills lavishly benefit the wealthiest households and individuals. The Senate bill doubles the estate tax threshold, enabling individuals to inherit tax free up to \$11 million and couples up to \$22 million. The House bill would eliminate the estate tax entirely.
- More than 60 percent of the Senate bill's individual tax cuts in 2027 go to the richest one percent of households making \$1 million or more; 48 percent of current tax-paying households would face tax increases according to the Tax Policy Center. The Senate bill ends individual tax benefits after ten years while making permanent tax cuts for corporations. The House bill continues both individual and corporate tax cuts.
- The Senate's \$1,000 Child Tax Credit increase to benefit families with children and make up for elimination of the personal exemption for dependents provides little or no assistance to poor and middle-income working families. Yet,
- No funds will be left over for the next decade to end child poverty for the more than 13.2 million children struggling to grow up healthy and educated.

Read the rest of this commentary at
TheSkanner.com

Lessons from the African American Vote in Alabama

The African Americans who have convinced themselves that one vote doesn't matter, should take a very close look at what happened during the recent special election in Alabama. In spite of the endorsement of President Donald Trump and the extremely conservative White voters who supported Roy Moore, Doug Jones, the Democratic candidate won the for the United States Senate seat vacated by Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Jones was the first Democrat elected to represent Alabama in the U.S. Senate in 25 years. How he won is very important to African Americans across this nation.

Exit polls showed that 98 percent of African American women who voted supported Jones and 93 percent of African American men who voted chose the Democratic candidate. The Jones' victory by 1.5 percent clearly shows that, without the Black vote, Jones wouldn't have won the special election. Equally important is



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the fact that this degree of African American voter participation in an off-season special election, demonstrates what we can do, when we choose to get involved. African Americans cannot allow "voter suppression" tactics, like additional photo identification requirements, to deter us from going to the polls.

According to Nonprofit VOTE, "In all but two states, voting age citizens convicted of a felony are barred from voting for some period of time." In Washington, D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Utah, the voting rights of returning citizens are re-

stored automatically once they're released. In Florida, Iowa, Kentucky and Virginia, ex-offenders are forced to petition the government to have their voting rights restored.

African Americans are disproportionately affected by voter suppression tactics and laws that deny ex-felons the

"We should be focused on 'voter registration' and not candidate endorsements at this stage of the game

right to vote; that's why we should be focused on "voter registration" and not candidate endorsements at this stage of the game. We cannot allow apathy and indifference to take the place of the hard won battle for voter participation on the part of African Americans. Just as we rallied and voted for President Barack Obama, we must rally and vote against the policies and political candidates promoted by the Trump Administration. We have to do whatever it takes to defeat those who would continue to support a system of economic inequality dressed up as tax reform that ultimately harms the majority of Americans.

Jones' victory in the special election in Alabama demonstrates that Black votes matter and that Black voters cast crucial votes in elections, where White voters are decidedly split; that's the real lesson. We make our victories and define our value. Let's not let others do that for us. Every Black vote counts and can make a difference in the Deep South and across the nation.

Dr. John E. Warren is the publisher of the San Diego Voice and Viewpoint and a contributing writer for the NNPA Newswire specializing in inter-governmental affairs.