

The New Congress: How it Plans to Cut and How to Fight Back

December 16, 2016



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Ellen Teller, Moderator



Ellen Teller is Director of Government Affairs at the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). She joined FRAC in 1986, and previously served as an attorney at the American Bar Association, Center for Science in the Public Interest and the Consumer Federation of America. She is the Board Chair of the Coalition on Human Needs.

Rep. Jim McGovern

Congressman Jim McGovern

has represented the 2nd CD in Massachusetts since 1996. He is the senior Democrat on the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Nutrition, and serves on the House Rules Committee. He is a tenacious advocate for low-income people, for health care, nutrition, and social justice and human rights.



Ellen Nissenbaum

Ellen Nissenbaum is the Senior Vice President for Government Affairs at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Since 1984, she has directed CBPP's work with federal policymakers and other national organizations, on budget, tax, health, and low-income issues.



Deborah Weinstein

Deborah Weinstein has been executive director of the Coalition on Human Needs since 2003. Before that she was director of the Family Income Division at the Children's Defense Fund. Debbie has been helping advocates use Census and other data to combat poverty and hardship for more than two decades.



Budget Reconciliation in 2017

Ellen Nissenbaum

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

December 16, 2016

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Biggest Threats:

- Repeal the ACA & Medicaid expansion
- Safety net entitlements:
 - SNAP, Medicaid, and SSI
- Deep budget cuts to other low-income programs
- Risk of major tax cuts that would force deeper cuts

*We can affect the outcome of some key decisions –
we can make a difference!*

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2017 Budget Timeline

- **January/February**
 - First budget resolution
 - First reconciliation bill / ACA repeal bill
- **March/April**
 - Second budget resolution (big budget & tax cuts)
- **Summer/Fall**
 - second reconciliation bill

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Reconciliation

- Affects entitlements, revenues, debt limit
- Provides procedural advantages in Senate
 - Cannot be filibustered; 51 votes to pass
- Follows unique rules; difficult to amend
 - Germaneness requirements, Byrd Rule
- Both Dems and GOP used for major bills
 - Designed to reduce the deficit, but not always used that way (e.g., Bush tax cuts)

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What Reconciliation *Can't* Do

- Make changes to Social Security
- Change discretionary authorizations or caps
- Make policy changes that don't score
- Increase deficits in the long term (after the years covered by the reconciliation directive)

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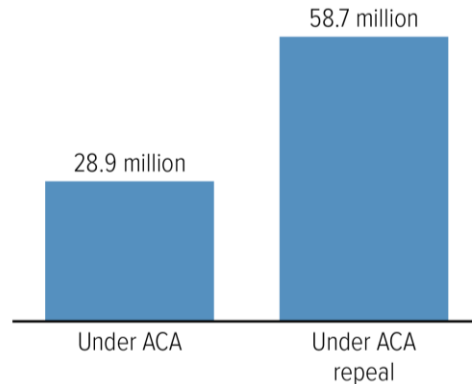
First Reconciliation Bill

- GOP planning on two reconciliation bills
- Expect the first reconciliation bill in Jan/Feb
 - Will first adopt a FY 2017 Budget Resolution
- Focus on repeal of ACA / Medicaid expansion
- Build off the vetoed 2016 reconciliation bill

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Repealing Affordable Care Act (ACA) Would Double Number of Uninsured

Number of uninsured in 2019



Source: Urban Institute, "Implications of Partial Repeal of the ACA through Reconciliation"

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Second Reconciliation Bill

- Process starts with FY 2018 Budget Resolution
- ACA replacement (and Medicaid block grant / cap) could be part of this reconciliation bill
- Focus of this reconciliation could also be:
 - Tax reform and/or infrastructure
 - Entitlement cuts (could block grant SNAP and SSI)
 - Other (eg., debt ceiling)

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Strategies to Shape the Outcome

- “Protect Our Care” campaign
- No compromise on Medicaid and SNAP entitlement
- Holding Democrats on tax cuts/infrastructure

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**We Can
Fight Back**

Deborah Weinstein

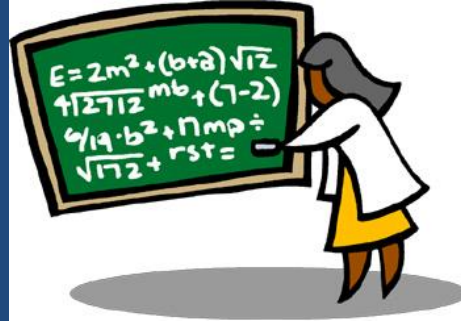


When 60 votes are needed in the Senate

Don't need higher math:

41 votes defeats the bill

We can hold 41 votes.



The Senate in the 115th Congress

- Republicans: 52
- Democrats: 46
- Independents: 2

When they only need a simple majority

To block, need:

Every Dem: 46

Independents: 2

Republicans: 3

Okay, not so easy

How to win?

- **We have to stand together** – showing members of Congress that there are people/organizations in their states/districts who will hold them accountable.
- **We must build the network** of people ready to take action when Congress is about to act.

A Start: SAVE for All Letter and Petition: go to chn.org

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a Google Forms petition titled "SAVE For All". The form is titled "SAVE For All" with a red asterisk indicating a required field. Below the title, it asks, "Are you signing the SAVE For All Letter for yourself or on behalf of a national, state, or local organization?" and provides instructions: "If you are an individual who wants to show their support select option 1, if you are signing up your Organization select option 2." There are two radio button options: "1.) I am an individual signing the Save For All petition." and "2.) I represent a National, State, or Local organization and am authorized to sign the Save For All Letter on their behalf." A "Continue »" button is visible below the options. A progress bar at the bottom right indicates "33% completed". The form is powered by Google Forms. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeQ-Tlgy4oypESNM7ayVrwKQcDAT8-vyYUaO-dj7KMAS4TJA/viewform?c=0&e>. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 7:09 AM on 12/16/2016.

Show you stand with

- Vulnerable people who face threats: (on basis of immigrant status, disability, religion, race, gender).
- People in poverty or close to it, who face loss of essential services and further loss of opportunity.
- Children, families, seniors – all who would be harmed by cuts to ACA, Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP...

Show you oppose

- **Cuts or structural constraints in basic safety net programs** – like ACA, Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, SSI, SNAP
- **Mass deportations of immigrants** that break up families; of Dreamers
- **More tax cuts** for corporations and upper-income people

Show you support

- Protection of low-income and vulnerable people
- Investments that build opportunity and shared prosperity
- Low-income tax credits
- Adequate revenues from fair sources

Thanks!

America's real greatness comes from its promise to extend opportunity and economic security to all.

Please join in fighting to keep that promise.