



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH H. SHULER
SECRETARY-TREASURER

TEFERE GEBRE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

March 26, 2015

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to urge you to vote against the Senate 2016 Budget Resolution (S. Con. Res. 11) scheduled for floor consideration later this week. Similar to its House counterpart, the Senate budget resolution offered by Budget Chairman Mike Enzi would accelerate the transfer of wealth from working-class families to large corporations and the wealthy, while slashing programs that serve moderate- and low-income families.

Rather than investing in the middle class, the Senate budget would cut over \$5 trillion in programs that help ordinary working families, including education, workforce training, public health, research, infrastructure and other critical investments. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 69 percent of Enzi's budget cuts would come from programs that serve people with low incomes, including health assistance, food programs and student loans. Overall, the Republican budget would cut non-defense discretionary programs almost 40 percent below the lowest level seen in the last 50 years.

Instead of building on the success of the Affordable Care Act, the Enzi budget calls for the repeal of the ACA, stripping health coverage from nearly 16 million Americans. It would also privatize Medicare and convert both Medicaid and the Children's Health Program into a single block grant and drastically reduce funding levels. Together, these changes result in a reduction of spending on health care for low- and moderate-income Americans by \$2.5 trillion over 10 years. The Enzi budget includes large cuts to Pell Grants and the food stamp program, and would cut the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit by \$159 billion. It also raises retirement contributions by \$127 billion over 10 years for federal employees, which translates into a 6 percent pay cut for current employees.

Finally, the Republican budget raises no new revenue for deficit reduction or needed investments. Instead of closing corporate tax loopholes that encourage companies to ship jobs overseas, the Enzi budget lowers corporate tax rates and taxes paid by the wealthiest Americans. Budgets are about choices and the Enzi budget makes it clear that the Republican agenda remains fixated on widening the income gap between the very rich and everyone else.

We urge you to oppose the Enzi budget and ask that you similarly reject all amendments debated during the "vote-a-rama" that seek to further attack education, comprehensive immigration and health care reform, retirement security and the overall progression of working and low-income families.

In addition, the AFL-CIO urges you to oppose the following amendments:

McCain #360: Expedites removals of child refugees without due process.

Collins #442: Changes the weekly threshold from 30 to 40 hours for the Affordable Care Act's requirement that employers offer coverage or face a penalty.

#407 Fischer and #445 Gardner: Would unnecessarily intervene in private-sector port labor negotiations and potentially undermine decades of standing labor law governing longshore employees.

Grassley #469: Would harm lawfully present immigrants, such as asylum seekers and victims of crimes, by altering eligibility for the earned income tax credit.

Thune #476: Provides an exemption from the employer responsibility requirements of the Affordable Care Act for elementary schools, secondary schools, and institutions of higher education.

Rubio #549: Weakens public education by expanding tax benefits for private elementary and secondary schools.

Rubio #554 and #555: #554 creates an incentive to take early retirement, resulting in lower Social Security monthly benefits for some seniors. Without an accounting of the income distributional impact, #555 contributes to Social Security's long-term actuarial imbalance. Both amendments are likely to contribute to future income inequality.

Rubio #589: Allows employers to ignore collective bargaining agreements when determining pay rates.

Isakson #609: Overturns NLRB rules governing appropriate units for union elections.

Isakson #610: Prevents the Department of Labor from promulgating the so-called ERISA "fiduciary rule" that would prohibit retirement investment advisors from offering conflicted advice.

Isakson #611 and #612: Overturns executive actions on immigration by blocking USCIS fees and subjecting Dreamers to deportation.

Hatch #646: Expands the H-1B visa program despite reports of widespread job displacement and wage abuse (the AFL-CIO supports **Grassley #958** that would reform the H-1B program).

Flake #665: Prohibits project labor agreements in government construction contracts.

Flake/Manchin #667: Reduces benefits for individuals who concurrently receive social security disability insurance benefits and unemployment insurance benefits.

Portman #687: Allows employers to substitute comp time for overtime pay (the AFL-CIO supports **Murray #798** that would mandate a minimum number of paid sick days).

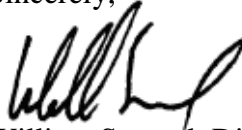
Lee #754: Repeals the Davis-Bacon Act.

Fischer #797: Cuts civilian staff at the Department of Defense.

Thune #808: Prohibits state and local governments from taxing access to the internet and restricts them from imposing their currently existing taxing authority on digital goods and services.

Alexander #837: Prohibits the NLRB from requiring employers to provide employee contact information prior to a union election, as required under the new NLRB election rule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Samuel', written in a cursive style.

William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department

WS/GJ/lkr