Work Requirements Don't Work: What's At Stake & What Can We Do?

A WEBINAR
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Work Requirements Don't Work: What's At Stake & What Can We Do?

A WEBINAR

#WorkReqsDontWork @NIHeartland
HOUSEKEEPING

Use the Questions/Chat box to send a question.

Q & A session @ the end of the webinar.

Video & slides will be made available.
TODAY’S SPEAKERS

MELISSA YOUNG (moderator)  
Heartland Alliance  
National Initiatives on Poverty & Economic Opportunity

RONALD JOHNSON  
Heartland Alliance Health

ELIZABETH LOWER-BASCH  
Center for Law & Social Policy

REBECCA VALLAS  
Center for American Progress

#WorkReqsDontWork @NIHeartland
QUICK POLL
Equity.
Opportunity.
For ALL.

We believe society is better for everyone when all of us can participate, prosper, and reach our full potential.

Direct service efforts in 100 communities nationwide & 12 countries internationally + research & evaluation, policy & advocacy, & systems change.

#WorkReqsDontWork @NIHeartland
NATIONAL INITIATIVES ON POVERTY & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

We are dedicated to ending chronic unemployment and poverty.

HEARTLAND ALLIANCE
NATIONAL INITIATIVES

#WorkReqsDontWork @NIHeartland
Working at the intersection of practice, policy, and research, we catalyze change that is informed by evidence and grounded in the experience of communities, providers, and impacted populations.
Work requirements don’t work to end chronic unemployment and poverty.
Work Requirements Don’t Work
Coalition on Human Needs & Heartland Alliance
March 2018
What is a work requirement?

• A work requirement is a condition of eligibility.
• Non-exempt individuals must work or participate in other “qualifying activities,” such as volunteering or attending school, for a minimum number of hours per month in order to keep their benefits.
• Depending on the program, people who lose benefits may not be allowed to re-enroll, and family members may also be denied benefits.
**What programs are affected?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currently</th>
<th>At Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash assistance under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</td>
<td>SNAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</td>
<td>• Limits on states’ ability to waive the time limits in areas of high unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mandatory employment and training</td>
<td>• Expansions of the populations subject to the time limit – older adults, parents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time limit for non-working childless “able bodied” adults 18-49</td>
<td><strong>Housing assistance</strong> in more places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing assistance</strong> in a few demonstration sites</td>
<td>Health insurance under Medicaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• HHS has granted work requirement waivers to 3 states: KY, IN, AR, with more likely to follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Advocates have filed lawsuit against HHS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Work requirements are based on stereotypes of who receives benefits

- The reality is that many recipients who can work are already working.
- Dog whistle invokes racialized stereotypes of “welfare queen” who has to be forced to work.
Need to explain the effects of work requirements

- Majority respond positively to the idea that “those who are able to work should do so.”
- But, people understand that taking away people’s health care and food doesn’t make them more able to work.

- Medicaid expansion enrollees from Ohio and Michigan reported that having Medicaid made it easier to look for employment and stay employed.
What we know from TANF and SNAP

• The main effect of work requirements is to make it harder for people to access and keep benefits.
• Mandatory work programs have little effect on employment or earnings, and use up resources that could be used to provide high quality training and supportive services.
• Most participants continue to work in poverty jobs that offer low pay, unsteady hours, no health coverage, no advancement; others are destitute.
Receipt of cash assistance fell dramatically among those eligible.
Who loses benefits?

- People who can’t find work
- Workers in jobs with not enough or irregular hours
- People who can’t keep up with the paperwork (or if the state messes it up)
- People with disabilities or other medical conditions
- Depending on state policies, students and people with caregiving responsibilities may also be affected
People who can’t find work

• During local or national recessions
• Areas of high unemployment
• People with previous histories of justice involvement
• Note: SNAP time limits and Medicaid waivers do not require states to offer job search or work activities to participants.
### Disproportionate Impact

The chart below illustrates the unemployment rate by educational attainment and race for adults 25 and up in 2017. The data is sourced from the Current Population Survey, Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a High School Diploma</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College, No Degree</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree or Higher</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
People working in jobs with not enough or irregular hours

Work requirements do not reflect the realities of today’s low-wage jobs, including seasonal jobs, involuntary part-time work, and unpredictable scheduling.

Current Population Survey, Table 8
PAPERwork Requirements

• People may lose benefits due to failure to submit paperwork to document their hours of work—*even when they are meeting the work requirements.*
  
  – People may lose benefits if the state loses or fails to process their documentation
  
  – Arkansas’ new Medicaid waiver requires people to report their hours online by the 5th of the month, leaving people with no internet access out of luck.
People with disabilities who do not qualify for SSI

Main reasons for not working among non-SSI, adult Medicaid enrollees, 2016

- Ill or disabled, 36%
- Taking care of home or family, 30%
- Retired, 9%
- Going to school, 15%
- Could not find work, 6%
- Other, 3%

Total = 9.8 Million


TANF had modest effects on employment

Figure 2. Percentage of Single Mothers with Any Work During the Year, and with Full-Year, Full-Time Work, 1987-2016

Note: Shaded areas denote years of economic recession.
TANF had modest effects on employment

Figure 2. Percentage of Single Mothers with Any Work During the Year, and with Full-Year, Full-Time Work, 1987-2016


Note: Shaded areas denote years of economic recession.
ABAWD time limits show NO evidence of increasing work

**Kansas SNAP Benefit Cutoff Did Not Boost Work**

Non-disabled childless adult SNAP participants before and after January 2014 cutoff of those not working 20+ hours per week

![Bar chart showing the number of SNAP participants who worked in Q3 2013 and Q1 2015](https://www.cbpp.org/kansas-snap-benefit-cutoff-did-not-boost-work)

- **Q3 2013**
  - **Not working**: 32,000
  - **Working**: 8,000
  - **Total**: 40,000
  - **Percentage working**: 21%

- **Q1 2015**
  - **Not working**: 16,000
  - **Working**: 24,000
  - **Total**: 40,000
  - **Percentage working**: 42%

...but the work rate rose only because there were fewer such SNAP participants overall.
Effective programs are intensive and higher cost

Many people desperately want to work and just need the opportunity.

The most effective job training programs cost $5,000 to $10,000 per recipient and serve relatively small numbers of recipients, but pay off in long-term earnings gains.
Workforce system is underfunded
Mandatory programs are wasteful

• When states are under pressure to serve lots of participants, they are more likely to operate low-touch job search programs, less likely to focus on career pathways and other strategies that have been proven effective.

• Mandatory programs put focus on attendance, not outcomes

• One study of TANF caseworkers found that they spent more than half their time documenting participation, not helping clients get jobs.
SNAP

• Farm Bill
  – House bill delayed due to strong Democratic opposition to draft bill including provisions making time limits more stringent
  – Senate may release bill in April or May
  – Needs bi-partisan support to pass

• SNAP “Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking”
  – Comments due April 9, 2018
  – Template comments available from CLASP
Medicaid

• Medicaid work requirement waivers
  – CMS issued letter encouraging such waivers on January 11
  – So far, have been approved in Kentucky, Indiana and Arkansas
  – About 8 other states have submitted requests; more likely to follow
  – NHeLP, SPLC and others have sued CMS

• Legislative changes unlikely without reconciliation
“Workforce Development”

“During a GOP retreat here in Appalachia, **Ryan** urged congressional Republicans to tackle ‘workforce development.’ He messaged the somewhat amorphous phrase as a matter of ‘helping people’— not a budget-cutting excursive. But at least a half-dozen Republicans told POLITICO that Ryan's proposal could include work requirements for welfare beneficiaries.”

-- Politico, February 1, 2018.

- Appropriations riders? Infrastructure bill?
Thank you

For more information:
https://www.clasp.org/work-and-public-benefits

Elizabeth Lower-Basch
elowerbasch@clasp.org
Why work requirements don’t work

Ronald Johnson, Heartland Alliance Health
Introduction—Who am I?
Background Information

• Heartland Alliance Health provides comprehensive services to people experiencing homelessness and people living in poverty. Services include:
  • Medical Services
  • Case Management
  • Benefit Enrollment
  • Mental Health Services Groups, Psychiatry, Counseling
  • Housing (Antonia & Pathway)
  • Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Services
  • Outreach street, shelters, encampments, community centers
What does the Outreach Team do?

- Provide short-term case management by:
  - Connecting people to housing through assessments
  - PATH mental health assessments
  - Connecting people to other departments within HAH (e.g. Resource Center, CSI, ACT, etc.)
  - Supporting folks while they transition from homelessness to permanent housing
  - Meeting people where they are by engaging in street outreach
Negative impact of work requirements on our participants

• Work requirements will negatively impact our participants by:
  • Increasing visits to the Emergency Room: kicking people off of Medicaid will only increase the number of visits to the ER, which is incredibly expensive.
  • Losing insurance, yet not being able to find work: there are often many barriers that keep our participants unable to work, find a job, and/or gain steady and reliable employment.
  • Not being able to access the necessary paperwork to “prove” employment.
Negative impact of work requirements on our participants (cont.)

- Making able-bodied folks work discriminates against folks who have:
  - mental illnesses
  - substance use problems
  - chronic illnesses that cannot be “seen” like many autoimmune disorders
  - other disabilities that do not qualify under these new requirements
  - people who cannot work because they care for others/are caregivers to family members, friends, children, etc.
Negative impact of work requirements on our participants (cont.)

According to the New York Times, “among adults on Medicaid who don’t work and could be subject to the work requirement, more than a third have a chronic health problem or disability, about half take care of their family or go to school, and just under 10 percent can’t find work.”

In other words…most folks on Medicaid are working
Why public benefits are crucial for our participants

Studies have found that:

• by having Medicaid benefits, people are actually able to stay employed and/or find work

• health care saves lives it is not coincidental that people experiencing homelessness have shorter lifespans than wealthy housed folks

• SNAP/TANF help a lot of our participants during the hardest, most vulnerable times of their lives
Conclusions

“Medicaid is working, as are most able-bodied adults who are eligible for it.”

Health care is a human right.

Heartland Alliance Health believes that housing is a form of health care.
Questions?
REBECCA VALLAS
Center for American Progress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When they say...</th>
<th>They really mean...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Flexibility”</td>
<td>Block grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also:</td>
<td>• Flat funding that doesn’t adjust for need, population growth, recessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Streamlining”</td>
<td>• Funding shrinks over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Local control”</td>
<td>• $ can be diverted to plug state budget holes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cap funding”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>”Model programs after TANF”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Welfare reform”</td>
<td>Reduce funding for assistance programs; cut benefits and/or restrict eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Workforce development”</td>
<td>Harsh time limits on assistance for people who cannot find a job or get enough hours at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Welfare to work”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Promoting work”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Community engagement”</td>
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House Speaker Paul Ryan

- “Ryan urged congressional Republicans to tackle “\textit{workforce development}.” He messaged the somewhat amorphous phrase as a matter of ‘helping people’—not a budget-cutting excursive.”

- “Ryan told lawmakers they need to prioritize ‘\textit{getting people the skills and opportunity to get into the workforce},’ according to a person in the room. And he insisted the idea is popular.”

- “Our goal should be helping those people close that skills gap. This improves people’s lives, and it helps our economy in general.”

Source: Politico - http://politi.co/2E6u9JZ

Rep. Mark Walker (House Republican Study Committee Chair)

“If you really want someone to get out there and find fulfillment… even though you’ve got to get the framing or the phrasing right, wouldn’t you want to see that person excel?” he asked. A little remarketing might be in order, he added: ‘When we talk about ‘Medicaid reform,’ that’s not a great buzz phrase.’”

Seema Verma (CMS Administrator)

“Making Medicaid a Pathway Out of Poverty”

\textit{Washington Post}

- “\textit{True compassion} is lifting Americans most in need out of difficult circumstances.”

- “We owe it to these Americans to try whatever may help them achieve the dignity and self-sufficiency they deserve.”
Methodology (GBA Strategies)

Message Testing (2017)
- **Focus groups** in Southfield, MI (white non-college women and African Americans) and Denver, CO (white non-college men and Hispanics) (Jan 2017)
- **Online ‘qual board’** discussion among more than two dozen college-educated voters across the country (half Trump and half Clinton voters) (Feb/March 2017)
- **Survey** (conducted April 8th – 13th, 2017)
  - Interviewed 1200 registered voters on landlines and cell phones
  - 144 African American Registered Voters
  - 132 Hispanic/Latino Registered Voters
  - 427 White Non-College Graduate Registered Voters
  - 399 White College Graduate Registered Voters
  - Overall margin of error: ±2.8 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval

National poll (2018)
- Survey conducted January 24th – 29th, 2018
- Representative online national survey of 2,000 registered voters plus demographic over-samples of:
  - African American Registered Voters
  - Hispanic/Latino Registered Voters
  - Millennial Voters ages 18-34
- Overall margin of error: ±2.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval
Key Findings

- Voters overwhelmingly oppose proposals to restrict eligibility and reduce funding for government assistance programs
  - Millennials, Independents, non-college whites, Republicans, even Trump voters
  - Majority oppose “work requirements” when understand consequences
  - Majority of voters less likely to support candidate who backs cuts

- Deep economic unease: 70% of Americans directly impacted by economic hardship in past year; believe government should meet basic living standards for those in need; reject dependency argument

- Majority believe cuts proposed to fund tax plan, oppose cuts to assistance programs to fund tax cuts for wealthy

- Progressive policy alternatives on jobs and investment supported by broad majorities across political spectrum and demographic lines
Below are some specific policy solutions that have been proposed as part of Republican efforts to restrict eligibility and reduce overall spending on government assistance programs for low-income people. For each one, please tell mark whether you would SUPPORT or OPPOSE that particular policy solution.

- Cut funding for Medicaid, which provides health coverage mainly for seniors, people with disabilities, children, and low-income families
  - Strongly oppose: 56
  - Total oppose: 80

- Cut funding and restrict eligibility for Social Security disability programs, which help people with disabilities replace lost wages
  - Strongly oppose: 49
  - Total oppose: 78

- Cut funding for home heating assistance programs for low-income families
  - Strongly oppose: 44
  - Total oppose: 78

- Cut funding for unemployment insurance, which provides temporary income support for workers who have lost their job through no fault of their own
  - Strongly oppose: 46
  - Total oppose: 77

- Cut funding for the Head Start early childhood education program
  - Strongly oppose: 46
  - Total oppose: 74

- Cut funding for programs that provide access to affordable housing
  - Strongly oppose: 41
  - Total oppose: 73
Below are some specific policy solutions that have been proposed as part of Republican efforts to restrict eligibility and reduce overall spending on government assistance programs for low-income people. For each one, please tell mark whether you would SUPPORT or OPPOSE that particular policy solution.

- Cut funding and restrict eligibility for nutrition assistance programs such as food stamps: 40% Strongly oppose, 66% Total oppose
- Restrict eligibility for health care subsidies under the Affordable Care Act: 36% Strongly oppose, 65% Total oppose
- (SPLIT D) Allow states to deny Medicaid health coverage to recipients ages 18 to 64 who cannot find a job with a certain amount of hours and are not participating in state-approved work programs: 32% Strongly oppose, 61% Total oppose
- (SPLIT C) Allow states to deny Medicaid health coverage to recipients ages 18 to 64 who do not have a job with a certain amount of hours and do not participate in state-approved work programs: 31% Strongly oppose, 57% Total oppose
- Consolidate multiple federal anti-poverty programs into "block grants" that replace guaranteed benefits with a set amount of money given to states to spend as they choose: 26% Strongly oppose, 57% Total oppose
- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to include workers who have no children: 15% Strongly oppose, 41% Total oppose
They are concerned that these programs create dependency, and they want to make changes to lift more people out of poverty.

They do not like these programs for low-income people and want to cut them to help pay for the tax cuts for the wealthy that they recently passed.

Which of the following do you think is the primary reason President Trump and Republicans in Congress are trying to restrict eligibility and reduce overall spending on government assistance programs for low-income people?
(IF OPPOSE IN Q.46/Q.47) What is the best reason to OPPOSE a proposal to restrict eligibility and reduce overall spending on government assistance programs for low-income people that includes all or most of these provisions?

- We shouldn't cut assistance for struggling families to fund tax breaks that mainly benefit the wealthy and big corporations: 47
- It will punish millions of Americans and deny them access to basic living standards: 21
- It does nothing to address the real problems of low wages and not enough good jobs: 17
- We have a moral obligation to help those in need: 14
Thinking about the election for Congress later this year, would you be MORE LIKELY or LESS LIKELY to vote for a candidate who supports each of the following proposals, or would it make no difference in your vote?

- Cut and restrict eligibility for Social Security disability programs
- Cut funding for Medicaid
- Cut funding for the Head Start early childhood education program
- Cut funding for unemployment insurance
- Cut funding for home heating assistance programs
- Cut funding for programs that provide access to affordable housing
- Cut funding and restrict eligibility for nutrition assistance programs

**Chart:**
- **Cut and restrict eligibility for Social Security disability programs:**
  - Much less likely: 41
  - Total less likely: 61
- **Cut funding for Medicaid:**
  - Much less likely: 41
  - Total less likely: 60
- **Cut funding for the Head Start early childhood education program:**
  - Much less likely: 38
  - Total less likely: 56
- **Cut funding for unemployment insurance:**
  - Much less likely: 36
  - Total less likely: 56
- **Cut funding for home heating assistance programs:**
  - Much less likely: 36
  - Total less likely: 56
- **Cut funding for programs that provide access to affordable housing:**
  - Much less likely: 35
  - Total less likely: 55
- **Cut funding and restrict eligibility for nutrition assistance programs:**
  - Much less likely: 36
  - Total less likely: 54
Below are some specific policy solutions that have been proposed as part of Republican efforts to restrict eligibility and reduce overall spending on government assistance programs for low-income people. For each one, please tell mark whether you would SUPPORT or OPPOSE that particular policy solution.

- Cut funding and restrict eligibility for nutrition assistance programs such as food stamps
  - Strongly oppose: 40
  - Total oppose: 66

- Restrict eligibility for health care subsidies under the Affordable Care Act
  - Strongly oppose: 36
  - Total oppose: 65

- (SPLIT D) Allow states to deny Medicaid health coverage to recipients ages 18 to 64 who cannot find a job with a certain amount of hours and are not participating in state-approved work programs
  - Strongly oppose: 32
  - Total oppose: 61

- (SPLIT C) Allow states to deny Medicaid health coverage to recipients ages 18 to 64 who do not have a job with a certain amount of hours and do not participate in state-approved work programs
  - Strongly oppose: 31
  - Total oppose: 57

- Consolidate multiple federal anti-poverty programs into "block grants" that replace guaranteed benefits with a set amount of money given to states to spend as they choose
  - Strongly oppose: 26
  - Total oppose: 57

- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to include workers who have no children
  - Strongly oppose: 15
  - Total oppose: 41
Cutting off people's basic living standards by taking away their health care, affordable housing, and disability support only makes it harder for them get back on their feet. Rather than punishing people who are already facing economic hardship, Congress should instead focus on policies that help create jobs and boost wages.

Requiring people who receive government assistance to find work is critical to promote self-sufficiency, prevent abuse and dependency, and ensure that benefits are going to those truly in need. Work requirements protect taxpayers and help lift up individuals trapped in a cycle of poverty.
Nearly Half of Voters Directly Affected by Scarcity of Jobs with Good Wages

Have you or a member of your immediate family had a serious problem with this issue over the past year?

Finding a decent job with good wages

- **Total**: 48% have personally faced this issue, and an additional 28% have a family member who has.
- **African American**: 38% have faced this issue, and an additional 30% have a family member who has.
- **Hispanic**: 36% have faced this issue, and an additional 28% have a family member who has.
- **18 to 34 years old**: 46% have faced this issue, and an additional 25% have a family member who has.
Have you or a member of your immediate family had a serious problem with this issue over the past year?

Being unable to get medical care because of the cost

- Total: 39 (24 + 15)
- African American: 43 (24 + 19)
- Hispanic: 50 (29 + 21)
- 18 to 34 years old: 57 (36 + 21)
Nearly 40% of Voters Also Struggling with Food Security

Have you or a member of your immediate family had a serious problem with this issue over the past year?

- **Total**: 39
- **African American**: 32
- **Hispanic**: 53
- **18 to 34 years old**: 54

**Question:**

- **Yes, I have**
- **Total Yes, I have + Yes, a family member has**

**Having too little money to buy enough food**
Nearly 30% of Voters Struggling with Rent & Mortgage Payments

Have you or a member of your immediate family had a serious problem with this issue over the past year?

- Yes, I have
- Total Yes, I have + Yes, a family member has

Falling behind on rent or mortgage payments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes, I have</th>
<th>Total Yes, I have + Yes, a family member has</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 34 years old</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read both statements, please tell me whether the first statement or the second statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

**Even if I may not need them now, I'm glad our society provides government services to ensure basic living standards for when times get tough.**

**I don't envision ever being in a position where I would need or want to use the health care, nutrition, housing, or income support offered by the government.**
For each one, please indicate whether you would support or oppose that particular policy solution.

(SPLIT F) Invest $1 trillion over next 5 years on comprehensive infrastructure needs including physical infrastructure like roads, bridges, airports, and public transport; energy infrastructure to increase production and use of clean energy; and human infrastructure to help workers with good jobs that pay decent wages, affordable education, and child care support.

Enact basic family-friendly policies including paid family and medical leave and paid sick days.

(SPLIT E) If individuals receiving government assistance to make ends meet can’t find work, the government should hire them directly to work rebuilding roads, bridges, and schools or training them to be teachers, home health care aides, or child care providers.

Help low wage workers afford quality child care and make universal pre-kindergarten available for all children.

For workers who lose their jobs to foreign competition, automation, or relocation, provide a salary and tuition to receive hands-on training in new skills and technology needed to fill available jobs in their communities.

Create wage boards that bring together businesses, government, and workers to ensure fair wages for employees across a specific industry and prevent employers from abusing the availability of cheap labor to drive down wages.
Progressive Policy Solutions Broadly Popular (Continued)

For each one, please indicate whether you would support or oppose that particular policy solution.

(SPLIT E) Invest $1 trillion over the next 5 years to improve our nation’s infrastructure by upgrading and building new roads, bridges, airports, and public transportation options like commuter trains, light rail, buses, and subways.

Ensure that all young people aged 25 or under are placed in a job, an apprenticeship, or enrolled in continuing education toward a specific vocation within 6 months of leaving school or a job.

Expand rental assistance for all low-income families spending more than half of their income on rent each month.

(SPLIT F) For anyone who is unemployed or underemployed, the government should guarantee them a job with a decent wage doing work that local communities need, such as rebuilding roads, bridges, and schools or working as teachers, home health care aides, or child care providers.

Increase the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour and make sure it rises with inflation so that fewer working families have to rely on public assistance benefits.
Review of Key Takeaways

- Voters overwhelmingly oppose proposals to restrict eligibility and reduce funding for government assistance programs
  - Millennials, Independents, non-college whites, Republicans, even Trump voters
  - Majority oppose “work requirements” when understand consequences
  - Majority of voters less likely to support candidate who backs cuts

- Deep economic unease: 70% of Americans directly impacted by economic hardship in past year; believe government should meet basic living standards for those in need; reject dependency argument

- Majority believe cuts proposed to fund tax plan, oppose cuts to assistance programs to fund tax cuts for wealthy

- Progressive policy alternatives on jobs and investment supported by broad majorities across political spectrum and demographic lines
 Winning the Message War

✓ Avoid pity/charity. Proposed cuts to health care, housing, and nutrition are proposals that will affect “you and your family” and “threaten your family’s economic security.”

✓ Safety net is an unfamiliar term for many voters. Use basic living standards, or the basics—these terms resonate.

✓ Avoid jargon, acronyms, program names (with exceptions). Use kitchen-table terms: programs that help families keep a roof over their heads…
Winning the Message War

✔ Name villains and highlight tradeoffs: *slashing affordable housing to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations.*

✔ Disability is an especially powerful lens, spurring outrage even among Trump voters.

✔ Resistance alone is not enough. Progressives gain more when they **oppose and propose** by putting big ideas on jobs, wages, and economic security on the table as alternatives to Trump budget proposals. *This approach even beats GOP work requirements message.*
Taking away someone’s healthcare, food, or housing isn’t going to help them find work any faster. If President Trump and Speaker Ryan were serious about helping the “forgotten man and woman,” they’d raise the poverty-level minimum wage.

In 2018, a worker earning $7.25/hr needs an extra 41 working days—more than 8 weeks—just to take home the same pay as she did in a single year when the federal minimum wage was last raised.

As a result, a full-time minimum-wage earner will lose nearly $2,370 in purchasing power this year. That’s more than 47 times the average tax cut this same worker can expect from Republicans’ tax law.

Raising the minimum wage just to $12 would save $53B in SNAP over 10 years, as fewer low-wage workers would need help feeding their families.
Hands Off Campaign

A national campaign dedicated to stopping cuts to nutrition, housing, Medicaid, disability benefits, and other critical programs that help kids and families afford the basics.

Core goals:
• Put a face on programs at risk
• Show policymakers that supporting cuts will have political consequences

Learn more at handsoff.org and #HandsOff
Find out what’s in your congressional district and state and share your story
Hands Off Campaign
Kendra Tappin, mother of 3, finished college and earned a master’s degree thanks to WIC, SNAP, housing assistance, and CHIP.
Marta Conner, mother of Caroline, age 8, lives with Rett Syndrome.

"Without Medicaid… for Caroline, this is a matter of life and death."
Hands Off Campaign

#HandsOFF
cuts to Meals on Wheels
to pay for tax breaks for
MILLIONAIRES
Questions?

Rebecca Vallas,
Vice President, Poverty
rvallas@americanprogress.org

www.handsoff.org
#HandsOff
Questions...?
Next Steps

The webinar recording & slides will be made available to you.

Via email, we’ll try to answer any questions we didn’t have time to address today.
Check out our (free!) toolkits

- WIOA Planning & Implementation Toolkit
- Opportunity Youth Employment Toolkit
- Employer Engagement Toolkit
- Working To End Homelessness Toolkit
- Transitional Jobs Programs Toolkit
- TANF and Transitional Jobs Toolkit

www.heartlandalliance.org/nationalinitiatives
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#WorkReqsDontWork @NIHeartland