



FACT SHEET

How Trump's FY 2019 Budget Hurts Veterans

By Rejane Frederick February 16, 2018

More than 1 in 5 veterans struggle to afford essential nutrition, health care, and housing needs while surviving paycheck to paycheck.¹ However, President Donald Trump's fiscal year 2019 budget is poised to make their struggles worse in order to pay for the \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts provided for corporations and millionaires in the December tax bill.² Here are just a few examples of the many ways in which President Trump's budget harms veterans.

- **Harming health and recovery:** President Trump's budget, once again, advocates for repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and replacing it with a model similar to the Graham-Cassidy repeal legislation introduced in September.³ CAP analysis found that under the Graham-Cassidy bill, 579,000 veterans would have lost Medicaid coverage by 2027.⁴ The vital health coverage gains made under the ACA—along with other essential health benefits for service-connected disabilities and conditions—would be decimated under this latest repeal effort.⁵

President Trump's budget also seeks to slash at least \$306 billion in federal funding from Medicaid over 10 years. The program currently provides lifeline coverage for 1.8 million veterans when they are not eligible for, enrolled in, or adequately covered by the Department of Veterans Affairs' health care system and are unable to afford private health insurance.⁶

Trump's budget eliminates funding for the Limb Loss Resource Center and the Paralysis Resource Center, both of which provide essential support for veterans,⁷ who are disproportionately likely to be paralyzed and undergo traumatic amputations.⁸ According to the 2016 American Community Survey, there are more than 5.3 million veterans with disabilities.⁹

- **Reducing economic opportunity and security:** Trump's budget contains \$72 billion in severe cuts over 10 years to the nation's disability supports and services. This includes cuts to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), which provides benefits to people who suffer from debilitating medical conditions that prevent them from working.¹⁰ Nearly 1 million veterans received SSDI compensation in 2013.¹¹

- **Reducing nutrition assistance:** Trump’s budget increases the risk for veteran food insecurity and hunger through its proposal to gut the nation’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by roughly 31 percent. CAP analysis found that in 2015, SNAP provided vital benefits to 1.5 million veteran households. The program would also become even harder to access, as the budget plans to tighten punitive time limits.¹²
- **Increasing housing insecurity:** President Trump threatens to make it even more difficult for veterans to escape homelessness and achieve secure housing.¹³ His budget proposes slashing \$8.8 billion from Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding for vital assistance programs, including a \$13 million cut from the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program, which funds the development of supportive housing for people with disabilities who have limited means—many of whom are veterans.¹⁴

The budget calls for the complete elimination of the Public Housing Capital Fund, HOME Investment Partnerships Program, Community Development Block Grant, and Housing Trust Fund, all of which provide low-income people—including many veterans—with critical resources to meet their housing needs.¹⁵ The budget also eliminates the Self-Help and Assisted Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP), which, among many other things, provides funding to repair and modify the housing of veterans with disabilities and limited means.¹⁶

- **Limiting access to justice:** President Trump calls for the elimination of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), which would end a critical source of federal funding for civil legal aid—a vital service that helps Americans who cannot afford lawyers get the legal help they need.¹⁷ In 2016, LSC-funded organizations helped nearly 41,000 veteran households with civil legal problems related to homelessness, barriers to health care services, and other earned benefits—to name just a few.¹⁸

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Endnotes

1 Katherine Gallagher Robbins and Anusha Ravi, “Veterans Living Paycheck to Paycheck Are Under Threat During Budget Debates” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2017), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/news/2017/09/19/439023/veterans-living-paycheck-paycheck-threat-budget-debates/>.

2 The White House, “An American Budget” (2018), available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/msar-fy2019.pdf>; Dylan Matthews, “The Republican tax plan leaves a \$1.5 trillion bill for the middle class to pay,” *Vox*, December 8, 2017, available at <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/12/8/16751032/senate-house-republican-tax-plan-deficit-spending-cuts>.

3 Seth Hanlon and others, “Trump’s Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy,” Center for American Progress, February 12, 2018, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2018/02/12/446453/trumps-budget-reveals-wants-everyday-americans-pay-tax-cuts-wealthy/>.

4 Katherine Gallagher Robbins and others, “5 Ways President Trump and Congressional Republicans Are Betraying Veterans” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2017), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/reports/2017/09/26/439661/5-ways-president-trump-congressional-republicans-betraying-veterans/>.

- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Hanlon and others, "Trump's Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy"; Robbins and others, "5 Ways President Trump and Congressional Republicans Are Betraying Veterans."
- 7 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Putting America's Health First: FY 2019 President's Budget for HHS* (2018), p. 110, available at <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2019-budget-in-brief.pdf>.
- 8 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Fact Sheet: VA and Spinal Cord Injury* (2009), available at https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_spinal_cord_injury.pdf; Duncan Wallace, "Trends in traumatic limb amputation in Allied Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan," *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health* 20 (2) (2012), available at <http://jmvh.org/article/trends-in-traumatic-limb-amputation-in-allied-forces-in-iraq-and-afghanistan/>.
- 9 Authors' analysis using the 2016 American Community Survey one-year estimates; See American FactFinder, "Table C21007: Age by Veteran Status by Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Disability Status for the Civilian Population 18 Years and Over," available at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_1YR_C21007&prodType=table (last accessed September 2017).
- 10 Hanlon and others, "Trump's Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy."
- 11 Michelle Stegman Bailey and Jeffrey Hemmeter, "Characteristics of Noninstitutionalized DI and SSI Program Participants, 2013 Update" (Washington: Social Security Administration, 2017), available at <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/rsnotes/rsn2015-02.html>.
- 12 Robbins and others, "5 Ways President Trump and Congressional Republicans Are Betraying Veterans"; Hanlon and others, "Trump's Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy."
- 13 Robbins and others, "5 Ways President Trump and Congressional Republicans Are Betraying Veterans."
- 14 Hanlon and others, "Trump's Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy"; Government Publishing Office, *Department of Housing and Urban Development* (2018), p. 568, available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BUDGET-2019-APP/pdf/BUDGET-2019-APP-1-13.pdf>.
- 15 Ibid, pp. 552, 559, and 560; Government Publishing Office, "Budget of the United States Government," available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=BUDGET&browsePath=Fiscal+Year+2019&searchPath=Fiscal+Year+2019&leafLevelBrowse=false&isCollapsed=false&isOpen=true&packageid=BUDGET-2019-APP&yord=800> (last accessed February 2018); U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *FY 2019 Budget Congressional Justification* (2018), p. 20-21, available at <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/CFO/documents/FY%202019%20Congressional%20Justifications%20-%20Combined%20PDF.pdf>.
- 16 Government Publishing Office, *Department of Housing and Urban Development*, p. 560; Government Publishing Office, "Budget of the United States Government."
- 17 The White House, "An American Budget," p. 99.
- 18 Ibid.; Legal Services Corporation, "How Legal Aid Helps Veterans," available at <https://www.lsc.gov/how-legal-aid-helps-veterans> (last accessed February 2018).