



‘Ivankacare’: Conservative groups rally against family leave proposal floated by Trump’s daughter

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As president of the United States, Donald Trump has seldom reached out to the center, let alone the left. Trump has catered to his far-right base, making it clear to fellow Republicans that they are either with him or against him. Period. But a new family leave proposal—one that his daughter, White House adviser Ivanka Trump, is encouraging—is becoming a source of debate on the right. And some Republicans and libertarians are not on board with what is already being called “Ivankacare.”

President Trump’s new budget proposal calls for six weeks of paid family leave for new mothers and fathers. And it remains to be seen whether or not Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi could find some common ground on a family leave bill. But on the right, “Ivankacare” is drawing both supporters and skeptics.

In addition to Ivanka Trump, GOP supporters include Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida and Rep. Ann Wagner of Missouri. But skepticism is being expressed by the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute.

Heritage and Cato are two very different right-wing think tanks. Heritage is more traditionally Republican, while Cato is unapologetically libertarian. Cato members are more likely to agree with Reason Magazine; Heritage members are more likely to agree with the National Review. And while Cato had zero influence on the Affordable Care Act of 2010, a.k.a. Obamacare, Heritage was a major influence on the ACA’s “universal health care via the private sector” goals—even if Heritage disingenuously denies that now.

Speaking to the Washington Examiner, Rachel Greszler of Heritage said that with “Ivankacare,” the “biggest concern is the potential explosion of the program over time—and then, having a federal program be the one source that everyone has to go to would not serve workers well. They would be far better off having a more tailored policy through their employer.”

For decades, libertarians have been arguing that much of the GOP isn’t fiscally conservative enough. And not surprisingly, Vanessa Brown Calder (a policy analyst for the Cato Institute) sees “Ivankacare” as a recipe for possible tax hikes.

Calder told the Washington Examiner, “Whenever you have some type of social insurance policy, you have to pay for it with tax revenue. Republicans are probably not going to want to be seen as a group that is raising taxes in any way; so, that could be an issue. Even if they say, ‘OK,

we're not raising taxes, we're going to do deficit spending,' Republicans don't like deficit spending. So that's an issue, too."

During the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan's fragile right-wing coalition included some libertarians (including Paul Craig Roberts) and a lot of far-right Christian fundamentalists. But the libertarian right and the Christian Right detest one another, and with "Ivankacare," one could see some conflicts between the Christian Right and hardcore fiscal conservatives.

The Washington Examiner also interviewed Ben Gitis, director of labor market policy for the American Action Forum. And Gitis explained, "The issue of paid leave from a conservative standpoint is competing values. It's pro-work, it's pro-family but on the other hand, would be a new government program. It would require new spending, and it impacts the private sector and some form of private market intervention—which conservatives aren't too often excited about."