



## Black Organizations, Lawmakers Slam Trump Budget

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President Donald Trump has unveiled his 2018 budget to resounding criticism and derision from a range of critics, including the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), the US Black Chamber Inc., policymakers, pundits, and other Congressional lawmakers.

“President Trump’s budget is based on the ill-advised idea that the poor can pull themselves up by their bootstraps,” says CBC Chair Rep. Cedrick Richmond (D-La.). “The truth is that some folks don’t have boots and tax cuts for the wealthy won’t help them buy a pair. A budget that threatens the lives and livelihoods of millions of Americans who, through no fault of their own, depend on social safety net and other federal programs, will not make America great again.”

Richmond is among African-American politicians, civil rights advocates and academicians and political experts who contend that the budget, if enacted, would unduly affect blacks, people of color, the poor and the vulnerable.

The budget reveals the administration’s fiscal priorities and includes extreme cuts in spending in education, food stamps, Medicaid, access to student loans, nutritional assistance, small business and the environment. Over the next 10 years, the proposed budget would strip more than \$800 billion from Medicaid and \$272 billion over all from welfare programs. Meanwhile, domestic programs would see funding reduced by \$57 billion.

The largest beneficiaries would be the military – to which \$54 billion is being directed – Homeland Security and the nation’s most wealthy who would again receive massive tax cuts which people like billionaire Warren Buffett has said is totally unnecessary and unneeded.

“This budget is immoral and irresponsible and confirms what then-candidate Trump showed us time and time again – he only cares about people who have bank accounts that look like his,” Richmond continued. “We encourage President Trump, Office of Management and Budget Director (Mick) Mulvaney and the Administration to learn from the CBC budget, which is moral and responsible and invests in families and our nation’s future. The CBC budget will move every American forward, not just those at the top, all while reducing the national debt.”

Politico Senior Staff Writer Michael Grunwald skewered the budget proposal, calling it a scam and castigating the Trump team for played fast and loose with the numbers.

“ ... This proposal is unusually brazen in its defiance of basic math, and in its accounting discrepancies amounting to trillions-with-a-t rather than mere millions or billions,” Grunwald writes. “Budgets hinge on assumptions about taxes, spending and economic growth, and the Trump budget plays fast and loose with all three to try to achieve the illusion of balance, relying heavily on spectacular growth assumptions as well as vague and unrealistic promises to eliminate tax breaks and additional spending programs that go conveniently unnamed in the text. It proclaims that “we have borrowed from our children and their future for far too long, but it is a blueprint for far more borrowing and far more debt.”

Ron Busby, president of the U.S. Black Chambers Inc., a D.C.-based national advocate for Black-owned businesses, expressed disappointment and puzzlement at a president who claims to be business-friendly but who has proposed to eliminate the Minority Business Development Agency.

Busby said the program accounts for less than .001 percent of federal spending, has produced 125,000 jobs, supports business centers throughout the country and has helped secure \$36 billion in contracts and capital for minority-owned businesses. Three weeks before Trump’s announcement, Busby said that Congress increased the program's funding to \$34,000,000 after he testified before the House Appropriations Committee and explained to Congress the importance of continuing funding.

"Yet again, the Trump Administration that campaigned on job creation turns its back on the very programs proven to spur minority business growth," said Busby in a statement. "Eliminating the only program dedicated to a diversity of job creators is an affront to the millions of minority entrepreneurs nationwide. We urge Congress to resist this ludicrous proposal and maintain their bipartisan support of the Minority Business Development Agency."

Kimberly Hall and Michael Hilton, of The Poverty & Race Research Council (PRRAC), co-wrote an op-ed arguing for the Trump administration and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to make a high quality education for all American children a priority.

“This proposed budget will close the doors of opportunity to hundreds of thousands of young minds around the country,” the op-ed said. “We urge Congress to reject this attack on equal access to a quality public education, students' civil rights, and ultimately our country's long-term ability to continue as a global leader. As we seek to prepare our students to compete on a global stage, the Trump Administration proposes to divert support from programs that have proven to benefit students' life outcomes to fund programs that have shown to cause academic harm. But it does not stop there.

The already short staffed Office of Civil Rights is on the line for considerable cuts in funding and staff positions. At a time when the complaint levels are near historic highs with a record number of complaints year after year, this budget will cripple the already understaffed office charged with protecting the civil rights of all students.”

Not everyone is upset about the proposed cuts. The CATO Institute, for example, praised Trump's proposal. CATO says the plan would eliminate the budget deficit within a decade and be beneficial for a number of reasons.

CATO believes the cuts would spur economic growth, while reforms to welfare programs will encourage more people to join the labor force and add to the nation's output.

In order to pay for defense, Homeland Security and a wall at the border, Trump's cuts also include the reduction or elimination of:

- The Corporation for Public Broadcasting
- Public service loan forgiveness
- Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants
- Community services block grants
- The Low Income Home Energy Assistance program
- The Home Investment Partnerships program
- The Energy Star and voluntary climate programs
- National Endowment for the Arts
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- The Overseas Employment Corporation