

Questions for the House Republican Task Force on Poverty

Last month, Speaker Paul Ryan announced the formation of the House Republican Task Force on Poverty, three years after Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer and Congresswoman Barbara Lee formed the Democratic Whip Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity. While Democrats welcome Speaker Ryan's announcement and agree with the need to address the urgent crisis impacting more than 46 million Americans, his words must be backed by actions.

As House Republicans release their budget today – and ahead of tomorrow's scheduled mark-up before the budget committee – there are many lingering questions about their task force and how they will take action to help the millions of Americans living in poverty:

1. Why are House Republicans only now realizing the need to address poverty, three years after the Democratic Whip Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity was formed?
2. How can Americans access economic opportunity and escape poverty when the Republican budget cuts programs that encourage job growth?
3. Why haven't Republicans included in their budget anti-poverty measures that will help lift millions of Americans—especially communities of color, which are disproportionately affected—out of poverty and into the middle class?
4. How will Americans living in poverty afford health care if the Republican budget cuts Medicare while turning it into a voucher, cuts Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and repeals the Affordable Care Act?
5. How do Republicans propose to fund anti-poverty programs when the Republican budget slashes investments to vital programs such as nutrition assistance, Medicaid, and Pell Grants?
6. If House Republicans are serious about addressing poverty in America, why have they repeatedly refused to consider raising the national minimum wage?
7. Why do House Republicans advocate for cuts to nutrition assistance when the USDA Food and Nutrition Service [reports](#) that over 45 million Americans benefited from SNAP in 2015?
8. Why have House Republicans dismissed out of hand the President's budget, when it featured numerous plans for combating poverty—from creating a permanent program to feed school children during the summer to expanding Pell Grants so students can attend classes year-round?
9. Will Speaker Ryan's new Task Force work with Democrats to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to childless adults, something that the has Speaker advocated for?
10. Will House Republicans join Democrats in supporting the "Half in Ten" Act ([H.R. 258](#)), which establishes a national strategy to halve the number of Americans living in poverty over the next decade?