Blog
Social Justice



In a proposal unveiled May 11, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives are working on a massive $4.5 trillion package of tax cuts. To partially offset that loss of revenue, they propose $880 billion in cuts, mostly to Medicaid. (OSV News/Reuters/Dado Ruvic)



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The Catholic Health Association of the United States decried the proposal to help pay for tax breaks by cutting Medicaid, the federal health insurance program that serves the poor.

In a proposal unveiled May 11, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives are working on a massive $4.5 trillion package of tax cuts that President Donald Trump has called for. To partially offset that loss of revenue, they propose $880 billion in cuts, mostly to Medicaid, with other cuts aimed at climate change strategies.

The Associated Press reports that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates the cuts would mean 8.6 million people would lose healthcare coverage.

Catholic Health Association president and CEO Sr. Mary Haddad in a statement the next day called the cuts "disastrous."

"We are deeply concerned that the current proposal unveiled in the House Energy and Commerce Committee to overhaul Medicaid still includes harmful policies and hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to the federal Medicaid program, threatening access to care for millions of Americans — particularly those in underserved areas where our member systems work every single day to provide quality, compassionate care," wrote Haddad, a Sister of Mercy.

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Because the cost of treating people without coverage will be passed on to others, the entire health care system is a risk.

"Congress has a moral obligation to consider the harm that such disastrous cuts would have on America's health safety net and the impacts this proposal would have for America's most vulnerable communities," the statement said. "Moreover, the cascading effects of lost coverage, including higher costs and greater strain on the system, will impact nearly all Americans — not just those who rely on Medicaid."

The statement pointed out that the program can mean life or death for millions.

"Medicaid is not just a health program — it is a lifeline. It provides access to care for those who need it most — poor and vulnerable children, pregnant women, elderly, adults and disabled individuals in our nation while ensuring their dignity," Haddad wrote.

"Congress should not take America down a dangerous path of drastically reducing access to health care in the United States."

Journalism training for sisters

As part of the "Pentecost Project with and through Sisters," the Vatican's Dicastery for Communication is offering women religious an online training opportunity in journalism.

Officials say the program is designed for religious sisters with a special interest in journalism and storytelling, particularly in reporting on marginalized people and places.

"Participants will gain essential knowledge about the contemporary media environment, journalism, participatory storytelling and editing," the May 14 announcement said. "The course will equip sisters with foundational skills to write articles and share stories from the margins of society using various media channels."

Those who demonstrate the most skill and dedication may be selected for an internship with the Vatican Media.

The program consists of 12 weekly meetings on Tuesdays via Zoom in September, October and November. Meetings will be held in English; simultaneous translation into other languages might be provided, depending on requests received.

The course is free, but participants must complete and submit this Google Form by June 13. Women admitted to the course will be emailed the necessary information by July 15.

More information about the Pentecost Project is available here.



The winner of this year's Mary Emil Penet, IHM, Award, given annually by the Religious Formation Conference is Sr. Ellen Dauwer. Here, Dauwer is shown giving the keynote presentation on charism at the Religious Brothers Conference Assembly in July 2024. (Courtesy of Religious Formation Conference)

Religious Formation Conference announces award recipient

The Religious Formation Conference has announced the winner of its annual Mary Emil Penet, IHM, Award: This year's recipient is Sr. Ellen Dauwer, a member of the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth in Convent Station, New Jersey.

The award recognizes those who have made a significant contribution to formation ministry, honoring someone who demonstrates a substantial commitment to and investment of energy and insight into the formative journey of religious sisters and brothers, Religious Formation Conference officials said.

Dauwer served two terms as the executive director of Religious Formation Conference, overseeing the development of the InterCongregational Collaborative Novitiate and the Together program, a collaboration with Catholic Theological Union.

"For as long as I have known Sister Ellen, she has loved being a woman religious and has had an unwavering interest in the unfolding of religious life," said former Religious Formation Conference board member Sr. Nancy Gerth. "Many of us have reaped the benefits of Sister Ellen's hard work and faith-filled service. No doubt we, and those who will join us in the future, will continue to do so for many years to come."

In 2008, Dauwer was elected secretary of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and was a member of the LCWR board and executive committee, later serving as an LCWR regional chairperson and on the LCWR national board.

"Sister Ellen is a multi-talented woman, and she shares those talents generously," said Sr. Cecilia McManus, assistant general superior for the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth. "Ellen is currently active in moving forward a robust ongoing formation program for our congregation. She has authored several thought-provoking articles that explore the history of religious life and the evolving reality of religious life today. ... Her dedication, scholarship, and pastoral sensitivity continue to inspire."