

Bill Kaplan: The GOP is morally bankrupt

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The Senate election in Alabama, imminent final passage of tax giveaways by the GOP-led Congress, Trump's continued sabotage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and threatened cuts to Medicare, Social Security and other domestic spending signal the moral bankruptcy of the GOP. Honorable and principled conservatives need to consider a new conservative party.

Trump and the Republican National Committee pulled out all the stops in supporting defeated Alabama GOP Senate candidate Roy Moore, despite multiple credible accusations that Moore had molested children. Wisconsin GOP leaders, including House Speaker Paul Ryan, Senator Ron Johnson and Governor Scott Walker merely called for Moore to "drop out." Other troubling issues were ignored by them.

The *Washington Post* opined: "He (Moore) had long stood for lawlessness and disorder. He called for 'homosexual conduct' to be outlawed, said a Muslim should not be seated in Congress and waxed nostalgic for the era of slavery." Not a peep from most GOP national and Wisconsin leaders. They should have learned from President George Bush in 1991.

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Back then, David Duke, former leader of the Ku Klux Klan, was the GOP candidate for Louisiana governor. Bush hit a moral home run: "When someone has a long record, an ugly record of racism and of bigotry, that record cannot simply be erased by the glib rhetoric of a political campaign. So I believe David Duke is an insincere charlatan. I believe he's attempting to hoodwink the voters of Louisiana, I believe

he should be rejected for what he is and what he stands for.” Duke endorsed Trump in 2016, who disavowed Duke’s support, only after much criticism. There’s more.

The final GOP tax bill, barring a miracle, will be passed by Congress shortly, with near-unanimous Republican support, including all Wisconsin GOP legislators (also supported by Walker). The *New York Times* editorialized: “Most Americans know that the Republican tax bill will widen economic inequality by lavishing breaks on corporations and the wealthy while taking benefits from the poor and the middle class. What many may not realize is that growing inequality helped create the bill in the first place.” The top 1 percent – GOP donors – got what they wanted!

The GOP tax bill will also escalate the GOP effort to eviscerate the ACA by repealing enforcement of the individual mandate. The *Washington Post* said: “The individual mandate is meant to spur everyone to join the insurance pool.” And, the ACA provides generous financial help for those who can’t afford health coverage. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office reported that repealing enforcement of the mandate would lead to 13 million more uninsured and a 10 percent increase in insurance premiums. All on top of Trump’s decreasing the ACA enrollment period by half and gutting outreach.

Politico reported: “Behind Trump’s plan to target the federal safety net. Under the banner of welfare reform, the administration is eyeing changes to health care, food stamps, housing and veterans programs.” Moreover, Ryan vows to repeal ACA, and cut Medicare and Social Security. The GOP is morally bankrupt.

— Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C. for the *Wisconsin State Journal* from 1995 – 2009.