

Bill Kaplan: Trump's budget betrays rural Wisconsin

Posted on Monday, Mar 18, 2019

The column below reflects the views of the author, and these opinions are neither endorsed nor supported by WisOpinion.com.

Rural America is in crisis. Farmers are overwhelmed by unrelenting low prices and loss of critical foreign markets (Trump's trade wars). South Dakota GOP Governor Kristi Noem said: "South Dakota has been devastated by the trade wars" She stressed "sustained low commodity prices" and the impact on farmers and main street businesses (Politico). Same for Wisconsin. The state has lost over 700 dairy farms. UW-Madison economics professor Steven Deller emphasized that Wisconsin farmers are running up debt and had a "17.8 percent decline in farm income last year" (Wisconsin Public Radio). The White House is not paying attention.

Trump ran as a populist, saying: "Nobody knows the system better than me, which is why I alone can fix it." He promised a laundry list: "no cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid", an infrastructure program, e.g., roads and bridges, middle class tax cuts and to "drain the swamp". Snake oil. And, Trump keeps tweeting: "Farmers, I LOVE YOU!" However, the budget Trump released last week belies his campaign promises and betrays rural Wisconsin.

Vox's headline said it all: "Ahead of 2020, Trump is going after Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid and more". The Trump budget cuts \$845 billion from Medicare through reduced provider payments, while increasing uncompensated care. Social Security is cut by \$25 billion, hitting disability benefits. And, Trump yet again calls for repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA), including Medicaid expansion. "It (Trump budget) proposes cutting \$777 billion over ten years from Medicaid and ACA subsidies (to buy private insurance)... ." (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities).

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

Wisconsin Democratic Representative Ron Kind tweeted "This budget isn't a budget for Wisconsinites - it was made for the powerful special interests and Washington elite. I'm committed to continuing the fight to protect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid from this Administration's reckless cuts". And, Wisconsin Democratic Senator Tammy Baldwin said: "The Trump Administration continues to attack the health care that millions of Americans depend on. We should be doing more to expand affordable health coverage - not less". Amen.

However, Trump and his minions want budget cuts to pay for their \$1.5 trillion tax cuts, mostly for corporations and the rich, because of resulting \$1 trillion deficits beginning in 2022 (New York Times). Remember that clueless Wisconsin GOP Senator Ron Johnson said the tax cuts would lower the deficit through higher economic growth. Now, Trump wants rural Wisconsin to pay big time with catastrophic cuts to programs that help farmers and small towns.

The Trump budget cuts the Agriculture Department by 15 percent, including crop insurance that protects farmers from depressed prices, weather and natural disasters. Conservation programs, rural housing loans and economic development spending are cut or eliminated. And, \$220 billion will be slashed from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Then there is the elimination of the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program, which feeds and educates vulnerable kids in poor hungry countries. Shame on Trump and the GOP. Their budget betrays rural Wisconsin, including farmers and all that is good in America.

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