

# The Delray Democrat

## The Murder Machine: Enriching the Rich By Killing the Poor<sup>1</sup>

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“We have to start talking about this budget as a form of social and political murder. And the reason I use the word ‘murder’ is because they know that it’s going to cause death.” Bishop William Barber, interviewed by Amy Goodman and Juan González on [Democracy Now](#).

What do you call people who would cut funding for the poorest and most vulnerable Americans in order to give more tax cuts to the richest and most entitled? Miscreants? Monsters? Murderers? Republicans? All of the above?

The greed goes beyond Trump and far deeper than anything Republicans have tried in the past. The last time Trump was in the White House Republicans passed the Orwellian-titled Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

It had little impact on jobs, was grossly weighted to the wealthiest Americans, raised taxes on some poorer Americans, and increased the deficit by between [\\$1.1-\\$1.9 trillion](#), giving the lie to “[ludicrous](#)” claims it would pay for itself or even “create additional revenue for the government.”

What Bishop Barber appropriately calls Trump’s “big, bad, ugly, deadly, destructive, debilitating bill,” just passed by House Republicans, is far worse. It [increases](#) the federal deficit by \$3.8 trillion while cutting Medicaid and other essential services by \$1 trillion.

Economics Nobel Laureate and former *The New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman [writes](#) that these cuts, especially those to Medicaid, “will cause immense, almost inconceivable hardship to the bottom 40 percent of Americans, especially the poorest fifth.”

### **Killing Them Softly with Sleights of Hand**

More than three-fourths of all Americans have a [favorable opinion](#) of Medicaid, including nearly two-thirds of Republicans. That’s not surprising, given that over half of Americans say that they or a family member has been helped by Medicaid and nearly two-thirds say that someone close to them has received help from Medicaid.

But 60% of Americans also [support](#) conditioning Medicaid benefits upon work. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly “Food Stamps”) already requires able-bodied individuals

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<sup>1</sup> [The Delray Democrat](#), May 2025, page 6.

aged 18 to 54 who are without dependents to work in order to receive benefits.

Republicans know it would be politically damaging to cut funding to Medicaid in order to give additional tax breaks to billionaires and multi-millionaires. But they also know something that those Americans who support work requirements do not, namely, you *can* cut benefits for people who *are* working by making sufficiently onerous to document that. In fact, as [The New York Times](#) reports:

Most of the people expected to lose coverage would be eligible for the program but unable to prove it under the law's strict paperwork standard.

Let that sink in for a minute: *most of the people who will lose coverage under Trump's big, bad, ugly, deadly, destructive, debilitating bill will actually have worked the requisite hours. They just won't be able to prove it.*

In fact, as Professors Pamela Herd and Donald P. Moynihan explain in a recent [guest essay](#) published in *The Times*, after Arkansas adopted such work requirements in 2018:

“nearly all of the people who lost coverage had met the requirements. They simply couldn't manage the paperwork to prove it.”

Or as Benjamin Sommers, a professor of health policy at Harvard and the lead author of a study on the Arkansas work requirements [puts it](#):

What this is really about is producing budget savings . . . This is not savings through improved efficiency, or more people going to work. It's savings by kicking people out of the program who are mostly eligible.

These sleights of hand are how Republicans hope to avoid the political damage that would result from their savage exploitation of the most vulnerable among us in order to reward the least needy and least deserving:

Republicans are opting for opaque cuts, which will shed millions of eligible beneficiaries by overwhelming them with pointless paperwork and other needlessly complicated administrative requirements.

And the staffing cuts directed by Trump pal Elon Musk have resulted in a lack of help with Medicaid/Medicare application problems. People have reported waiting more than five hours on hold and then having the call dropped.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 7.6 million people will become uninsured as a result of this ugly bill. And studies have demonstrated that *the lack of health insurance is intractably linked to premature, unnecessary deaths.*

A pre-Obamacare [study](#) at a time when 45 million Americans were uninsured estimated that the lack of health insurance led to 45,000 Americans dying prematurely and unnecessarily. A later [study](#) examining the impact of Medicaid expansion when it first became available under Obamacare estimated that Florida's failure to expand Medicaid to 800,000 eligible Floridians

resulted in 2,776 unnecessary deaths during a four-year the period 2014-2017.

Because the Florida Republican Party refuses to expand Medicaid, Thousands more Floridians have died since then. Click [here](https://floridadecideshealthcare.org/petition/) or go to <https://floridadecideshealthcare.org/petition/> to support an Amendment to the Florida Constitution that would require Florida to expand Medicaid.

Trump's big, bad, ugly, deadly, destructive, debilitating bill will also have a devastating impact on rural hospitals, hundreds or which are already at an immediate risk of closing. Many of those who will lose coverage will be children, which is not only heartless but economically brainless, as Prof. Krugman explains:

Providing health care to children isn't just about social justice and basic decency. It's also good economics. Children who receive adequate care grow up to be more productive adults. Among other things they end up paying more taxes, so Medicaid for children almost surely pays for itself."

But those returns come in the future, and the modern Republican Party does not care about the future of our children . . . or our Republic or our democracy, or our planet, for that matter.

They are laser focused on the present and on how they continue afflicting the most afflicted in order to comfort the most comfortable without attracting too much attention.