

McConnell Office Visit for December 22, 2017

Tax Bill and War on Coal Synopsis

The latest tax bill passed by the Senate will increase the deficit by \$0.5-1.5 trillion over the next ten years¹⁻⁴, a deficit McConnell complained about repeatedly during the previous administration when it was trillions less than it is today.⁵⁻¹⁰ The tax bill will initially lower and then increase taxes on the poorest 50% of Americans, while the wealthiest Americans will continue to receive tax cuts worth hundreds of thousands per year.¹⁰⁻¹³ This is the clearest demonstration of redistributing wealth from the poorest to the wealthiest Americans via the most regressive tax bill in 50 years.¹⁴ Over the last 30 years, the wealthiest Americans have reaped increasing economic rewards, garnered a greater percent of the total wealth of the US, while the median American family has not seen their income grow appreciably during that same time, and in many cases their wealth has shrank.¹⁵ While McConnell has lamented the fact that many middle-income Americans are not better off today, he turns and supports passage of a tax bill that aggravates instead of attempts to address the problem.

The problem with the tax bill are similar to McConnell's repeated comments about the "war on coal" in which he complained endlessly about how regulations were hurting the coal industry.¹⁶⁻¹⁷ Mostly, by confabulating multiple factors affecting coal production and use, and blaming all of them on regulations. Just like the tax bill ignores how tax cuts do little or nothing to help working Americans, efforts to cut coal regulations has done nothing to improve Kentucky coal production and completely ignored the cost of coal on the health of Kentuckians. Instead, McConnell has promoted the false promise of cheap coal energy as a means for shifting the true cost of coal and its effects on the health of Kentuckians from the responsibility of coal producers and users onto the backs of working Kentuckians. This repeated culture of rewarding the greediest and punishing working Americans with the consequences, leads to the following questions.

Questions

1. ***If deficits were a bad idea during the last administration, when the deficit was about half what it is today⁵⁻¹⁰, please explain why suddenly another \$1.5 trillion onto a deficit of \$20 trillion is now okay?***
2. ***As the tax bill has no specific jobs provisions in it, why call it: The Tax Cut And Jobs Act? This bill will increase taxes on working Americans after ten years while tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans will still be billions lower in 10 years. Thus, poorer Americans will pay a greater portion of the cost of federal revenues while the wealthiest Americans will pay a smaller share. Perhaps a better name for the bill is – Tax Cuts for Wealthy People, Paid for by Working People. **Is McConnell also planning to cut support for social insurance programs paid for by payroll, not income taxes, to help cover his deficit spending, further taking from the paychecks of the poorest for the benefit of the wealthiest?*****
3. ***Climate change has cost the Federal Government and estimated \$350 billion in the last decade from extreme weather and fire events¹⁸, a value likely to increase, not decrease in coming decades. **What has McConnell seriously done legislatively to work towards decreasing these costs, instead of aggravating them by ignoring key concerns, science, economic reports and other pertinent information readily available on human caused climate change?*****
4. ***It was estimated the health effects of coal cost Kentucky nearly 260 deaths/yr and \$3 billion/yr in health care costs in 2012.¹⁹ This is far greater than the economic benefits of coal to Kentucky. **How does McConnell justify his support for less environmental protections, that shift the costs of coal from industry required prevention onto the backs of his constituents in the form of higher deaths and health care expenses?** Please do not attempt to justify based on cheap electricity.***

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5. McConnell accompanied and praised Scott Pruitt to Hazard, KY in October where Pruitt declared the war on coal over.²⁰ Scott Pruitt has taken a butcher knife to environmental protections, ignored public and environmental input and done “nothing” to enhance our environment and everything in his power to damage it. ***Does McConnell honestly think these policies are beneficial to Kentuckians? Would McConnell like to justify why his constituents should just keep paying more, enduring more and allowing business interests to continue to trump their interests? How does McConnell think Kentuckians are going to respond when asked – are you physically and financially healthier today than 6 years ago?***

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