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**Postcard Party # 107 February 8, 2019**

**National**

## DOJ ROLLS BACK ANTI-DISCRIMINATION RULES

Trump Justice Dept. reversing Obama-era positions on discrimination policies. CNN: “Recent Trump administration moves on civil rights bring into sharper focus its efforts to reverse the Obama era and curtail decades-old laws designed to shield blacks, Latinos and other racial minorities from discrimination. Last week, the Justice Department retreated from a prior position and said Texas’ record of voter discrimination did not justify requiring prior approval for any new redistricting maps. The Obama administration had argued that a provision of the Voting Rights Act empowering judges to intervene should cover Texas, which has been mired in minority-voter disputes for years. The administration is also apparently considering retrenchment against policies that appear neutral but have the effect of discriminating against minorities. In December, a federal commission convened by the White House recommended the rescission of Obama policy intended to ensure that African-American students are not disproportionately targeted under school discipline rules. The Washington Post reported in January that the administration is considering a “far-reaching” curtailment of such regulations against practices that - although not intentionally discriminatory - have a “disparate impact” on minorities, whether at schools, on the job, or in the pursuit of housing. (The Justice Department would not comment on the report.) At the same time, the administration is also engaged in a lawsuit against Harvard’s affirmative action admissions practices that have traditionally benefited blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans. It is siding with a group that says Asian-American applicants are held to a higher standard for admissions, compared especially to black students.”

**Write to Matthew Whitaker, Acting Attorney General, to demand that these anti-discrimination protections be reinstated. (**U.S. Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001)

**REPUBLICAN SENATORS PROPOSE COMPLETE REPEAL OF ESTATE TAX**

Just over a year after the GOP rammed through its $1.5 trillion tax plan - which has predictably [rewarded the ultra-rich](https://www.commondreams.org/news/2018/12/19/tax-scam-turns-one-critics-say-law-one-biggest-transfers-wealth-richest-1-us-history) while doing [virtually nothing for workers](https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/01/28/year-after-one-greatest-heists-us-history-survey-confirms-corporate-tax-cuts-didnt) - Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and his Republican colleagues were condemned for pushing yet another "[blatant giveaway to their wealthy donors](https://twitter.com/PatrioticMills/status/1090273215799353344)" by [introducing a bill](https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2019/01/28/top-gop-senators-propose-repealing-estate-tax-which-is-expected-be-paid-by-fewer-than-americans-year/) on Monday that would permanently repeal the estate tax.

"Greed has no limit for the GOP," [declared](https://twitter.com/clemente_frank/status/1090034327650484224) Frank Clemente, executive director of Americans for Tax Fairness. "We need to reverse direction - not allow the GOP to hand the rich even more tax cuts."

The deeply unpopular Republican tax law already significantly weakened the estate tax by doubling the exemption, allowing [couples with up to $22 million](https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/2017-tax-law-weakens-estate-tax-benefiting-wealthiest-and-expanding-avoidance) to pass on their fortunes tax-free.

If it passes Congress, the plan introduced by Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), John Thune (R-S.D.), and McConnell - and [co-sponsored by dozens](https://www.thune.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=1A7AA395-2D0D-46C7-B33A-983B72211368) of Senate Republicans—would accomplish the longstanding GOP goal of completely eliminating the estate tax.

"Ending the estate tax would give a tax break of up to $63 billion to the Walton family and $39 billion to the Kochs - but $0 to 99.8% of Americans," Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) noted in a tweet on Tuesday. "At a time of record inequality, the very last thing we should do is line the pockets of the rich."

**Write to Senators Tillis and Burr and demand that they publicly oppose this new giveaway to the wealthy that will result in fiscal ruin.**

**GUN PURCHASE BACKGROUND CHECKS**

In 2017, nearly 40,000 Americans died due to guns---the highest level in 50 years. Gun deaths and injuries have escalated due to congressional inaction.

**Please write to Rep. Mark Meadows, and demand that he support H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Check Act.**

**State**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY GETS ANOTHER CHANCE TO PROVIDE HEALTHCARE TO NC**

More than half a million North Carolinians lack health care coverage because our state has refused to expand Medicaid to cover low-income workers. Although the federal government will cover 90% of the cost of providing health insurance to those who need it, North Carolina has refused. A new session of the General Assembly begins this week, and with it another chance to do right by those in need in our state.

• 500,000 people in North Carolina make too little to afford health insurance and too much to qualify for Medicaid. This is known as the Medicaid Gap. The Affordable Care Act provides subsidies to people of modest means, but gave money to states to expand Medicaid programs to cover the very poor. North Carolina did not accept this money.

• Single people making less than $12,000 a year and families of three making between $8,000 and $20,000 do not qualify for health care premium subsidies, but also do not qualify for Medicaid. For these people, healthcare is unattainable.

• 37 states have expanded Medicaid. In these states, the very poor have access to health insurance and medical care.

• Expanding Medicaid would add 43,000 jobs to North Carolina’s economy. It would bring $4 billion in federal funding to North Carolina annually.

**Bottom Line: During the last few sessions of the NC General Assembly, legislators have filed bills to expand Medicaid and close the coverage gap. The session beginning this week is another opportunity to give North Carolinians the same chance at healthy outcomes that those in the rest of the country have. Write to Rep. Henson and McGrady, and Sen. Edwards and request them to promise to support an expansion of Medicaid for our most vulnerable citizens.**