

From February 17 - 19 2025, we conducted research on messages around the GOP's budget plan.

The most effective statements for Democrats to push back on the GOP budget had the following themes:

- **Medicaid Cuts for Billionaire Breaks:** Messages that highlighted the importance of protecting Medicaid in particular were some of the most persuasive at lowering Trump's job approval, such as a message in the 100th percentile that highlighted how *"seniors and working families could lose healthcare and food assistance, while the richest get even richer."* Notably, messages with the exact same content that did *not* mention Medicaid performed slightly worse than those that did.
- **Social Security and Medicare are next:** Messages that highlighted how the Trump Administration's cuts throughout government indicate that Medicare and Social Security are next on the chopping block were highly persuasive for Americans, such as this message that *"Trump is slashing programs that people rely on — and he's clearly eying Social Security and Medicare next"* which ranked in the 94th percentile.
- **Elon Musk:** While just mentioning Elon Musk's personal gains and DOGE cuts alone was not as persuasive, pairing Elon Musk's budget cuts with specific impacts to Americans and how *"Musk wasn't elected to run our government, and his decisions could harm millions"* proved to be in the 97th percentile of effectiveness.

The least effective statements on the budget for Democrats had the following themes:

- **Aviation Safety:** Messages around budget and staffing cuts to FAA and impacts to consumer aviation safety were the least effective messages to persuade Americans to care about the Trump budget cuts.
- **USAID:** Global disaster relief and supporting American allies were ineffective at persuading Americans against the Trump budget cuts.

**Read the full messages we tested this week (in rank order of most effective to least effective at lowering Trump's job approval):**

*Percent rank is relative to 70+ messages tested since Inauguration on a variety of topics, like inflation, abortion, the economy, and more. The higher the percentile, the more effective that talking point is compared to other Democratic messages we've tested. **We recommend utilizing above-average talking points, i.e. those above the 50th percentile.***

**(Medicaid Cuts for Billionaire Tax Breaks):** Donald Trump wants to cut Medicaid and food programs to give tax breaks to billionaires. That means seniors and working families could lose healthcare and food assistance, while the richest get even richer. Democrats won't allow a budget that hurts everyday Americans like this.

100%

**(Medicaid + Food Cuts):** Donald Trump wants to cut Medicaid and food programs that millions of Americans rely on. That means seniors, families, and even children could lose healthcare and go hungry, while Trump and Republicans look the other way. Democrats won't allow a budget that hurts everyday Americans like this.

99%

**(Elon Musk + Specific Impacts):** Donald Trump is allowing Elon Musk to cut funding for public programs – food assistance, consumer protections, public schools, and scientific research. Musk wasn't elected to run our government, and his decisions could harm millions. Democrats won't approve a budget that puts Elon Musk in charge.

97%

**(Medicaid Cuts):** Donald Trump wants to cut billions from Medicaid, making it harder for low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities to get the healthcare they need. Millions could lose coverage or face higher costs. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that doesn't fully fund Medicaid and protect affordable healthcare.

96%

**(Social Security + Medicare Are Next):** Donald Trump wants to cut billions from the federal government, and Social Security and Medicare are clearly next. Trump is slashing programs that people rely on – and he's clearly eying Social Security and Medicare next. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that doesn't fully fund Social Security and Medicare.

94%

**(Healthcare + Food Cuts — No Medicaid Mention):** Donald Trump wants to cut healthcare and food programs that millions of Americans rely on. That means seniors, families, and even children could lose access to healthcare and go hungry, while Trump and Republicans look the other way. Democrats won't allow a budget that hurts everyday Americans like this.

92%

**(Food Assistance Cuts):** Donald Trump is cutting food assistance programs like SNAP, making it harder for families to put meals on the table. Millions of children and seniors rely on these programs, but Trump's budget would leave them hungry. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that doesn't fully fund food assistance.

90%

**(Healthcare Cuts for Billionaire Tax Breaks — No Medicaid Mention):**

Donald Trump wants to cut healthcare and food programs to give tax breaks to billionaires. That means seniors and working families could lose access to healthcare and food assistance, while the richest get even richer. Democrats won't allow a budget that hurts everyday Americans like this.

89%

**(Elon Musk — No Specific Program Mentions):** Donald Trump is letting billionaires like Elon Musk make government decisions and slash programs without any oversight. That means cuts to services that hardworking Americans rely on, while big corporations and the ultra-rich benefit. Democrats won't fund a government that works for billionaires over everyone else.

87%

**(Trump Prioritizing Culture Wars):** Donald Trump is focused on extreme policies while ignoring real issues like rising food prices, unaffordable housing, and healthcare costs. He's prioritizing culture war issues – purging federal employees involved in DEI efforts or vaccine development – instead of lowering costs. Democrats won't pass a budget that lets Trump keep ignoring real issues.

80%

**(Abuses of Presidential Power):** Donald Trump is overstepping his authority, causing constitutional crises that threaten our democracy. His actions, like illegal firings and ignoring court orders, undermine the rule of law. Democrats will refuse to help Republicans fund the government until Trump and Republicans agree to stop any abuse of presidential power.

73%

**(Specific Cuts - No Healthcare Mention):** Donald Trump is slashing budgets for disaster relief, food safety, and air travel security. That means slower hurricane response, unsafe food, and potential disasters. Trump is recklessly shutting down government programs – and Americans will suffer. Democrats won't pass a budget that cuts essential services to keep families safe.

68%

**(Tariffs are a National Sales Tax):** Donald Trump is giving tax breaks to the rich while raising prices on everyday goods through new tariffs. These tariffs are essentially a national sales tax – they'll make groceries, gas, and other essentials more expensive. Democrats won't allow a budget to pass unless Republicans stop these harmful price hikes.

65%

**(Health Care Is Next — No Social Security or Medicare Mention):** Donald Trump cut billions from the federal government, and healthcare programs are clearly next. Trump is slashing programs that people rely on – and this will drive healthcare costs even higher. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that doesn't fully fund the healthcare programs Americans rely on.

63%

**(Cost of Living):** Donald Trump is using taxpayer dollars to give more breaks to billionaires and wealthy corporations, while he has no plans to address the high cost of living for working Americans. Democrats won't pass a budget that helps billionaires and wealthy corporations instead of everyday Americans.

61%

**(Veterans Benefits):** Donald Trump is cutting funding for VA hospitals and veterans' benefits while giving tax breaks to billionaires. Veterans risked their lives for this country, but Trump's budget would leave many without care. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that doesn't fully fund the VA and honor those who served.

58%

**(Public School Funding):** Donald Trump is gutting public school funding, leading to fewer teachers, crowded classrooms, and cuts to special education. Schools should prepare kids for success, not suffer budget cuts. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that doesn't fund public schools and give every child a fair shot.

56%

**(Trump's Personal Vendettas):** Donald Trump is wasting tax dollars firing government officials he doesn't like instead of fixing real problems. Instead of lowering healthcare and grocery costs, he's purging public servants and anyone focused on diversity. Democrats won't pass a budget that enables Trump's personal vendettas against the people who challenge him.

55%

**(Elon Musk is Enriching Himself):** Donald Trump is allowing Elon Musk to cut government programs – all so he can redirect federal government contracts to himself. Musk is cutting services Americans rely on, while he gets millions per day in government handouts. Democrats won't approve a budget that lets billionaires raid the government for their own benefit.

52%

**(NIH + Medical Research Cuts):** Donald Trump is slashing funding for the National Institutes of Health, delaying lifesaving research on cancer, Alzheimer's, and other diseases. These cuts mean fewer treatments, fewer cures, and more suffering for American families. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that doesn't fully fund medical research and protect Americans' healthcare.

48%

**(Food Safety Cuts):** Donald Trump is cutting funding for food safety inspections, including for facilities such as those handling sensitive items like infant formula. These cuts threaten our health, and risks more food-borne illnesses spreading across the country. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that doesn't protect the food we feed our families.

42%

**(FAA Cuts):** Donald Trump is laying off critical federal employees, including hundreds of Federal Aviation Administration employees. These cuts have already made our country less safe, with multiple plane crashes already affecting the country. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that impacts the FAA and travel safety.

17%

**(USAID Cuts):** Donald Trump is gutting USAID, cutting programs that provide disaster relief, fight global hunger, and support American allies. These cuts weaken America's influence and make the world less stable. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that doesn't fully fund foreign aid, which strengthens national security and saves lives worldwide.

11%

**(CFPB Cuts):** Donald Trump is cutting funding for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the agency that protects Americans from predatory lenders and financial fraud. Without proper funding, banks and credit card companies will have free rein to exploit consumers. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that doesn't protect consumers.

10%

**(FAA Cuts):** Donald Trump's administration has fired hundreds of federal aviation employees, including safety and technical personnel who held critical roles in aviation safety. These cuts will make air travel less safe, especially given multiple recent plane crashes. Democrats will fight any Republican budget that puts travelers at risk.

7%