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Contact: [Rachel McCleery](#) (202) 224-4515

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**Wyden Statement at Conference Committee on Republican Tax Plan**  
*As Prepared for Delivery*

The American people are witnessing a masterclass in how one political party, relying on secrecy, distortion and brute force, can muscle an unpopular, deficit-exploding corporate giveaway to passage. This is the ultimate betrayal of the middle class. It does not give middle class Americans the tax cuts they deserve now, and it takes away Medicare and Social Security later.

News just broke that Republicans have reached a deal on a final bill. So let's understand that what's happening today is a sham. This is an obvious attempt to lend credibility to a baseless Republican talking point about following regular order. But nobody should mistake this conference for a serious debate -- not when Republicans and special-interest lobbyists have already wrapped up the real talks in secret. They'll be throwing parties on K Street while middle-class parents are struggling to determine if their families will be among the millions and millions of losers.

From the top, Republicans have had an undivided focus on delivering the sweetest possible deal for multinational corporations and the powerful. Permanent corporate breaks and huge new loopholes. A tax hike on 13 million middle-class taxpayers in the first year, and millions more after that. Big new incentives for corporations to ship jobs overseas. Tens of millions of Americans either going without health care or seeing their premiums jump.

The details are still leaking out, but at every turn in this debate, there's been more bad news for the middle class. A final bill will come with an astonishing price tag, and it's bound to do a terrible job getting help to people who need it. It's clear now that Republicans decided to pass on their final opportunity to take a different tack -- to protect middle class families from harm. They reportedly settled on even bigger breaks for those at the top, a capstone on a budget-busting gift to corporations and the donor class.

Republican deficit hawks went quiet at the prospect of an unpaid-for tax bill piling onto the national debt. But they're screeching once again, seizing on the deficits they're causing as the pretext to slash Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, anti-hunger programs, education funding and more.

It did not have to be this way. Democrats agree that the tax system is broken. It is not too late for bold members on the other side to reject this reckless partisan process, work on a bipartisan basis as Ronald Reagan did, and put the interests of middle class families first.

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