

Washington Interfaith Staff Community

Post-election Analysis and Discussion

November 21, 2014

Panel:

Marty Shupack	Church World Services - Director of Advocacy
Rev. Jen Butler	Faith in Public Life – CEO
Kathy Saile	Center on Budget and Policy Priorities – Assoc. Dir. For Government Affairs
Ron Skeef	Unknown affiliation
Sandy Sorenson	United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries, Washington, DC – Director

This event was well attended by representatives primarily from the activist, faith-based communities and interested individuals in the DC Metropolitan area. The most significant audience participant was Sister Simone Campbell, Executive Director of NETWORK, of national Catholic social justice lobby. (Nuns on a bus).

The first panel speaker, **the Rev. Jen Butler**, reflected upon the recent elections, among her points. She opined that the loss incurred by the Democrats was greater than expected, far worse than anticipated, pre-election polls were simply wrong

The reality:

- Lowest turnout since 1942
- American people are disillusioned
- Democrats message was poorly articulated
- However, progressive initiative did well wherever presented, e.g. Minimum Wage Ballot Initiatives
- Democrats did not present a comprehensive message
- State races were also terrible but we must continue our efforts there.

Response

- By necessity Democrats will “play defense” somewhat
- Pending need for a continuing resolution by Dec 11, should be planning now if you are in that arena, especially if a shutdown results.
- Need to begin state actions if government shutdown results (Did not specify what actions but spoke of Moral Monday action in NC and activity in Georgia)
- Must develop joint power mapping across issue clusters

- Lobby legislative committee chairs
- There are 5-10 leaders who are influential in marshaling media
- Need to focus on states and on state issues

Opportunities

- Spoke of religious freedom. Understand the small opposition group driving anti-Islam message and how they threaten religious freedom for all.
 - This offers opportunities to collaborate with other faith-based not usually considered partners of a progressive agenda.
- Immigration issue
- Build bi-lateral efforts with other faith-based organizations where possible. (May not be “progressive” but have common cause with liberals in some areas)
 - Sentencing Reform
 - Structural Democracy Issues (Gerrymandering, Get out the vote, Voter Denial)

Summary

- We need to inform the “articulate” legislative leaders
- Currently a leadership vacuum
- Collaboration important

The second speaker was **Kathy Saile** of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

- Did not agree that the Continuing Resolution will necessarily result in a government shutdown
- “Republicans think that they have a mandate so they are acting as though they have a mandate, and that may be sufficient”
- The number of Republican candidates seeking reelection in purple states will moderate impact of the conservative Tea Party representatives.
- Encouragement - The Republicans do not have a veto-proof house.
- Opportunity – Children’s Health Initiative has been wildly successful.
- Drew comparison to 2001 when the House, Senate and Executive were in Republican control and still the Democrats achieved some victories.
- **Question: Are Boehner and McConnell in charge of the Republican caucuses or is the Tea Party members. The answer to this question will define the next two years.**
- Handed out several charts (see attached)

Discussion

- Transportation HUD budget discussions.

- Housing Vouchers (Now only 1 in 4 applicants are successful), this may become worse as Republicans attempt to transfer funding in programs more likely to limit beneficiaries of the social safety net
- It is anticipated that both sides will attempt to reduce spending on census funding
 - 2020 census will be particularly important and there is incentive to blunt its impact in many areas including determinations of benefits to many programs.
- Republicans will try to make permanent “tax extenders” without offsetting the resulting loss of revenue.
 - While the Senate has pursued temporary extensions, the House has moved to make a number of largely corporate tax extenders permanent. And the House has gone still further by expanding one of the biggest extenders and making the expansion permanent, as well as by making permanent some temporary tax breaks that are not part of the traditional pool of tax extenders. The House has not offset any of the measures’ large cost
 - If Dems cannot stop these initiatives they must be encouraged to “get something” in the resulting bargain such as the earned income tax credits and other social program.
- January 6 congress returns for the Budget and Appropriations Process. This will offer Dems an opportunity for “pushing” the Democrat’s agenda
 - Set firm amounts for spending of non-defense discretionary funds. (Frequently the Republicans will increase defense funding by shifting funds from the non defense discretionary spending thus diminishing necessary funding to adequately respond to world health crisis, and other non-defense initiatives.)
- Lobbyists must pay attention to the development of reconciliation instructions to authorize committees. This will provide some leverage to Democrats to keep authorization bills as focused as possible.
 - This is particularly important in that any initiatives that cannot be resolved by the authorizing committees will, by rule, go to the Budget Committee that will thereby diminish the power of the Authorizing committee. A move the Authorization Committee will want to avoid.
- There is pent up energy to address the cost of Food stamps, Employer Health Insurance Mandate, a desire on the part of Republicans to turn Medicare into some type of Block Grant, (this will also permit state Republicans to “show” that the Dems have reneged on their promise to subsidize state health cost or the ACA ability to lower health costs).
 - The Republicans often use increase in one nutrition program to diminish another nutrition program. E.g. SNAP
 - The Democrats upward pressure on healthcare and the need to meet medical emergencies will be difficult if these Republican initiatives succeed.
- Republicans looking for tax cuts, but not for working poor

- Just isn't enough money in the Budget so pressures will be great!
- Referred attendees to CBPP's paper Budget and Tax Plans Should Not Rely on "Dynamic Scoring" Estimates are Highly Uncertain and subject to Manipulation on their website www.cbpp.org
- All this addresses the need to "shore up" Moderates in the legislature and the Whitehouse lest they be inclined to be conciliatory in the light of the Republican's PR campaigns.

Last half of the program opened floor to general discussion. For the most part comments were pretty general and elaborated on several of the comments made by the panel or discussed specific actions being pursued in the states.

Sister Simone Campbell, (Nun's on a Bus) made some interesting points and shared two illustrative stories. Among her points:

- It is essential that field workers specifically, and all of us in general, engage the non-voters to convince them that VOTING MATTERS!
- She spoke of a family that was having trouble making ends meet and on this occasion had come to a food pantry to receive needed rations Sr Simone engaged the householder in conversation and asked: Are you going to vote? Why yes he responded, but not for those Democrats! When Sr. Simone inquired as to why his response was that "Mitch McConnell understands me."
- On another occasion she spoke to a veteran and asked whether he was going to vote. No, he said. But why she inquired. "Because no one cares what I think."

There was further discussion on a variety of issues where the need for "Power Mapping" was discussed (for more on this subject see:

<http://www.moveon.org/organize/campaigns/powermap.html>

Need to have a specific "ask" when seeking alliances with other activist groups, especially those groups that do not occupy the same political space as ours. On specific issues you may find agreement.

A quick mention was made for Trade Policy, may be an issue coming in 2015 – Fast Track leads to bad policy.

WISC Community Analysis of the 2014 Elections: How do the results impact our issues?

**Friday, Nov. 21, 10 AM to 12 NOON
United Methodist Building
Conference Rooms 1 & 2, 100 Maryland Ave. NE**

Kathy Saile



Kathy Saile is Associate Director for Government Affairs at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. She promotes the Center's work concerning federal budget and tax issues and their impact on efforts to reduce poverty and expand opportunity with federal policymakers. Additionally, Kathy provides support to other organizations and coalitions by providing policy assistance and strategic guidance.

Previously, Saile served as Director of Domestic Social Development for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops working on issues related to domestic poverty. She has also held senior public policy positions at Lutheran Services in America and Catholic Charities.

Jennifer Butler



Jennifer is the founding CEO of Faith in Public Life. Before leading FPL Jennifer spent ten years working in the field of international human rights representing the Presbyterian Church (USA) at the United Nations and is an ordained minister. While mobilizing religious communities to address the AIDS pandemic and advocate for women's rights she grew passionate about the need to counter religious extremism with a strong religious argument for human rights. Jennifer served in the Peace Corps from 1989 to 1991 in a Mayan village in Belize, Central America where she discovered she

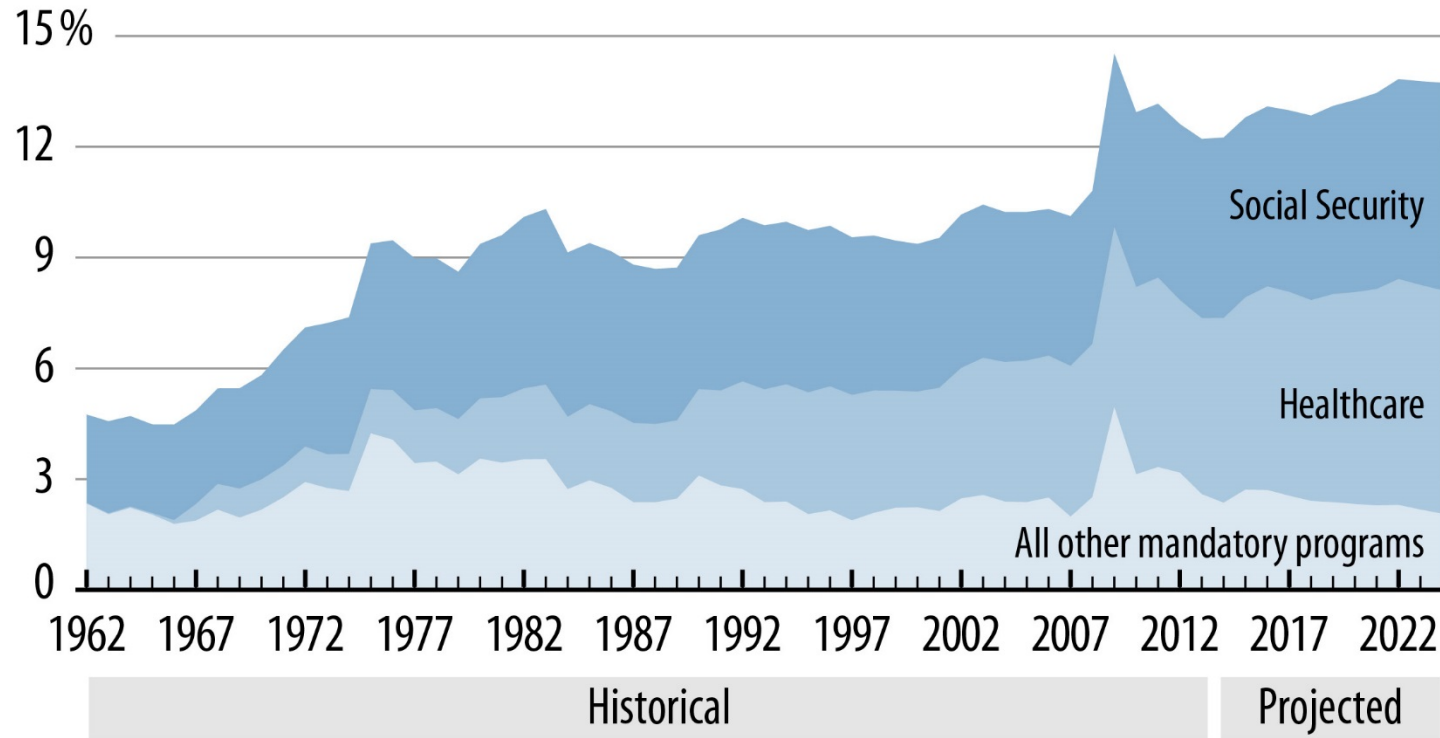
was at heart a community organizer. Jennifer and her husband Glenn together run Iona Conversations, a Christian spiritual community in downtown Washington DC.

Kathy and Jennifer's presentations will be followed by a discussion among WISC community staff on how we can position ourselves to advance our issues in the 114th Congress. WISC staff, interns, volunteers, friends and colleagues are invited. No RSVP is necessary. All are welcome!



Rising Entitlement Spending in Coming Decade Reflect Demographics and Health Costs

Spending as a percent of GDP

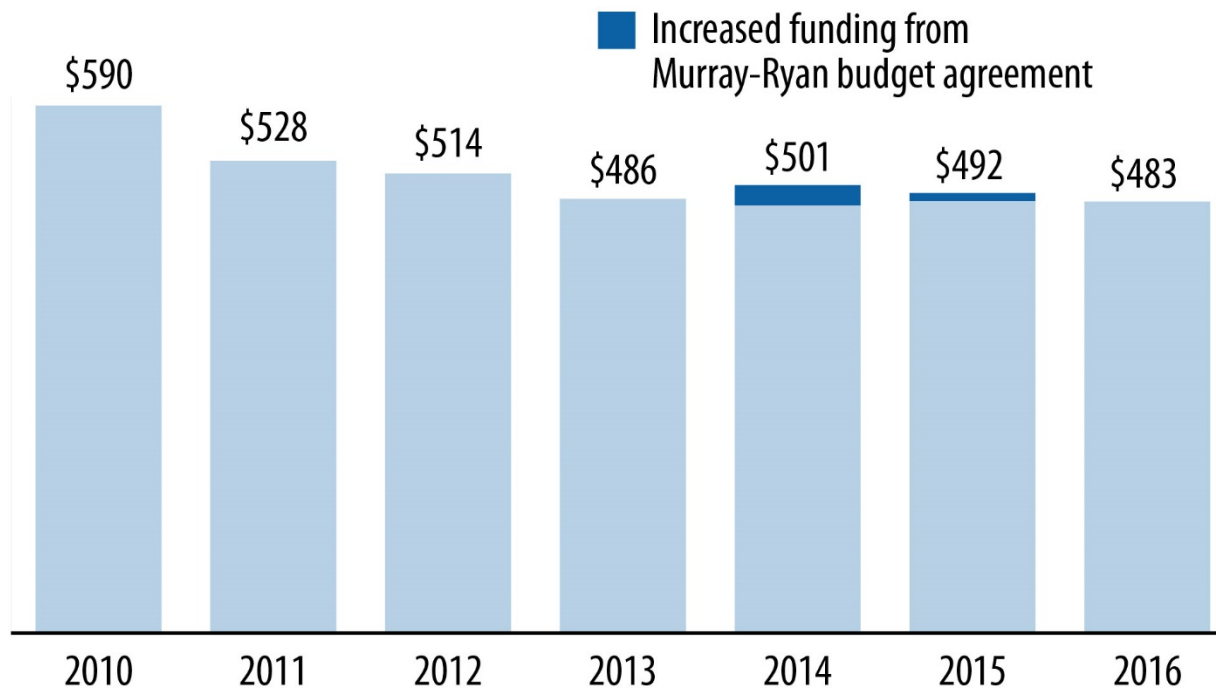


Source: OMB through 2013; CBPP analysis of CBO data thereafter.



Non-Defense Discretionary Funding Still Constrained Even After Budget Agreement

Non-defense discretionary funding in 2015 dollars (billions)



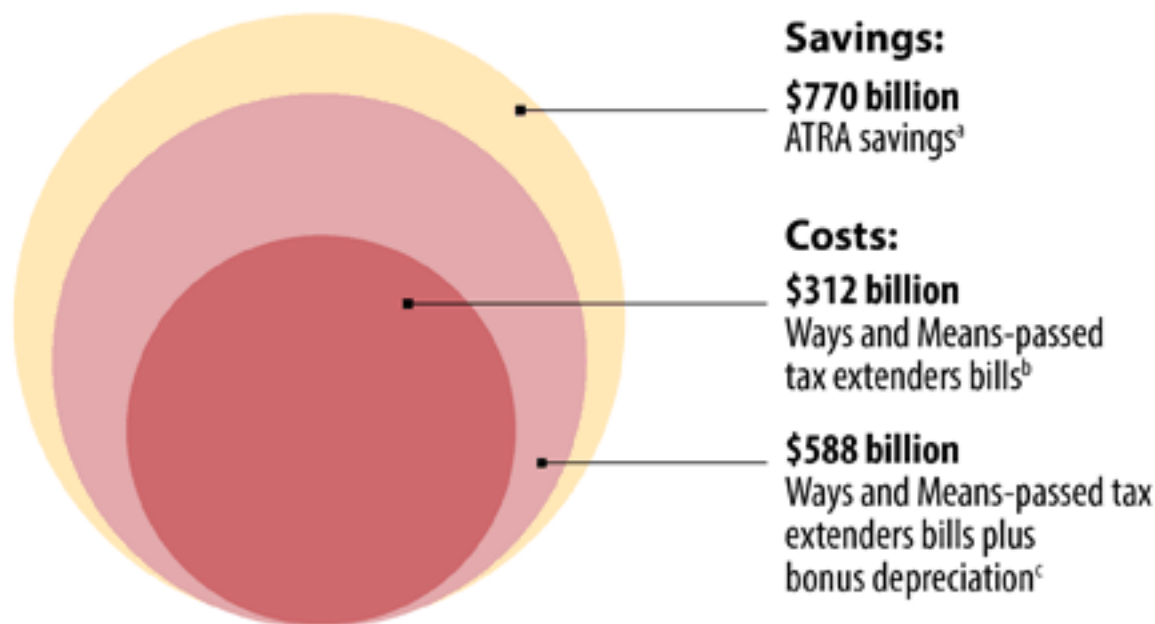
Notes: 2013 figure represents Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate of actual funding after sequestration. All amounts exclude funding for disasters, emergencies, program integrity, and Overseas Contingency Operations. The 2010 level does not include any Recovery Act funds.

Source: Congressional Budget Office

Figure 1

Making Tax Extenders and Bonus Depreciation Permanent Would Undo Large Share of High-Income Savings from "Fiscal Cliff" Deal

Savings and costs, 2015-2024



a High-income tax provisions in 2012 American Taxpayer Relief Act (ATRA), the "fiscal cliff" deal.

b Cost of House Ways and Means-passed bills to make nine extenders permanent and expand the research and experimentation credit.

c Cost of Ways and Means-passed bills plus House-passed proposal to expand bonus depreciation and make it permanent.

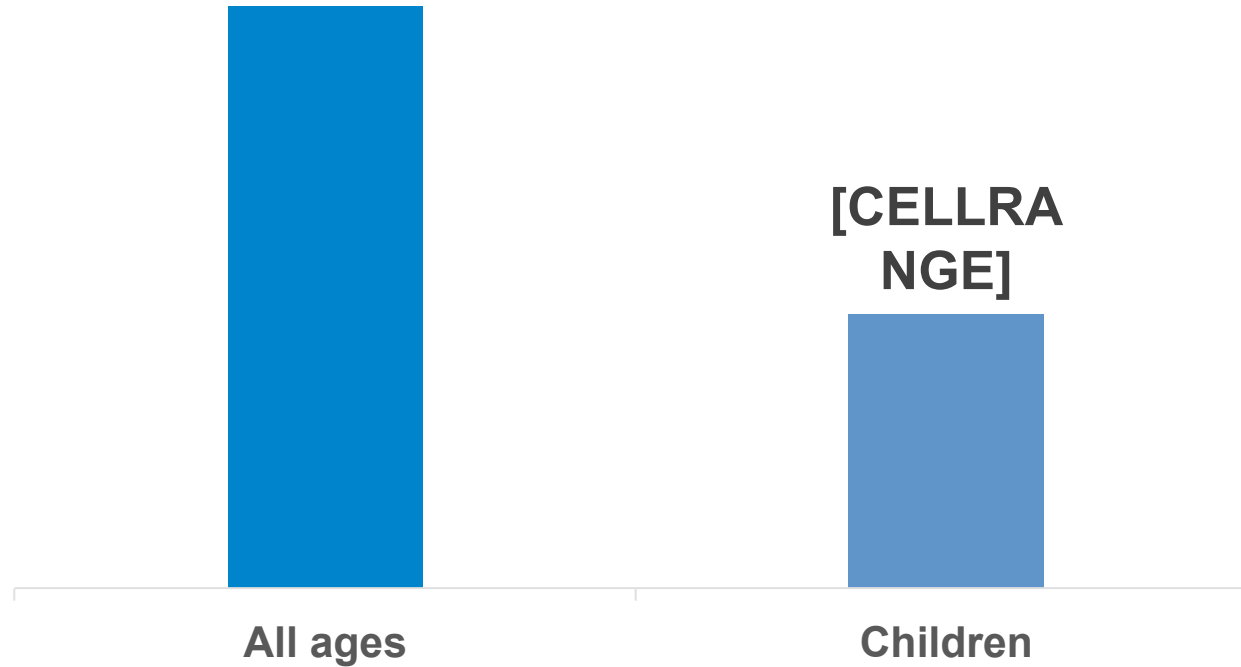
Note: Does not include other, largely individual tax provisions that the House has voted to make permanent without paying for them but that are not tax extenders, such as expansions of the Child Tax Credit. Estimates do not account for interaction effects.

Source: Congressional Budget Office for extenders' cost, CBPP calculation based on Joint Committee on Taxation estimate for ATRA revenue.



If Congress Fails to Make Key EITC and CTC Provisions Permanent:

People who would fall into or deeper into poverty*



EITC = Earned Income Tax Credit; CTC = Child Tax Credit. Improvements would expire at the end of 2017.

Estimates represent number of people affected in 2012

Source: CBPP calculation using the March 2013 Current Population Survey using the Supplemental Poverty Measure.

Program Spending as a Share of GDP Under Continuation of Current Policies

	Avg 1964-2013	2014	2019	2024
Non-interest Spending	18.1%	19.2%	18.6%	19.0%
Less Social Security	14.1%	14.3%	13.5%	13.4%
Less Social Security and Medicare	12.5%	11.3%	10.5%	10.0%

1 Note: Program spending includes all federal expenditures other than net interest on the debt.
 Sources: OMB through 2012; CBPP analysis of CBO data thereafter; BEA.