



THE ELEPHANT

IN THE ROOM: THE POPE ADDRESSES A GOP-CONTROLLED CONGRESS
OPPOSED TO HIS PROGRESSIVE VALUES

BRIDGE
PROJECT

CONSERVATIVES IN CONGRESS ARE AT ODDS WITH THE TEACHINGS OF POPE FRANCIS

All eyes will be on Pope Francis next Thursday when he addresses a joint session of Congress during his much-anticipated visit to Washington, D.C. Since the start of his papacy, Pope Francis has signaled a shift in focus for the church towards protecting “the least of these,” whether it’s through the stewardship of our environment or addressing income inequality and providing a livable wage. But will the Republicans, who currently control both chambers of Congress, heed Pope Francis’ words? From climate change to immigration to workers’ rights, the values espoused by Pope Francis are at odds with conservatives in Congress.

Climate Change

POPE FRANCIS PROPOSED MORE ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

Politico: “Pope Francis Is Expected To Issue His Encyclical Letter On The Environment This Year.” According to Politico, “Pope Francis is expected to issue his encyclical letter on the environment this year, and [Cardinal Oscar] Rodríguez said many within and outside of the Catholic Church are looking forward to it ‘with hope.’ The letter also comes ahead of the United Nations’ meeting on climate change in Paris this December.” [Politico, [5/12/15](#)]

Washington Post: The Encyclical “May Be The Most Authoritative Papal Teaching Ever On The Environment.” According to the Washington Post, “[Pope] Francis is putting the final touches on what may be the most authoritative papal teaching ever on the environment, a topic bound up with economics, global development and politics and thus very controversial.” [Washington Post, [4/27/15](#)]

Encyclical: The Earth “Cries Out To Us Because Of The Harm We Have Inflicted On Her By Our Irresponsible Use And Abuse Of The Goods With Which God Has Endowed Her. We Have Come To See Ourselves As Her Lords And Masters, Entitled To Plunder Her At Will.” According to Laudato Si by Pope Francis, “In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. ‘Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs’. This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.” [Pope Francis – Laudato Si, [5/24/15](#)]

Encyclical: “The Urgent Challenge To Protect Our Common Home Includes A Concern To Bring The Whole Human Family Together To Seek A Sustainable And Integral Development.” According to Laudato Si by Pope Francis, “The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.” [Pope Francis – Laudato Si, [5/24/15](#)]

Encyclical: “Particular Appreciation Is Owed To Those Who Tirelessly Seek To Resolve The Tragic Effects Of Environmental Degradation On The Lives Of The World’s Poorest.” According to Laudato Si by Pope Francis, “Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.” [Pope Francis – Laudato Si, [5/24/15](#)]

Encyclical: “The Climate Is A Common Good... A Very Solid Scientific Consensus Indicates That We Are Presently Witnessing A Disturbing Warming Of The Climatic System.” According to Laudato Si by Pope Francis, “The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. At the global level, it is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life. A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system. In recent decades this warming has been accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level and, it would

appear, by an increase of extreme weather events, even if a scientifically determinable cause cannot be assigned to each particular phenomenon.” [Pope Francis – Laudato Si, [5/24/15](#)]

Encyclical: “The Problem Is Aggravated By A Model Of Development Based On The Intensive Use Of Fossil Fuels.” According to Laudato Si by Pope Francis, “The problem is aggravated by a model of development based on the intensive use of fossil fuels, which is at the heart of the worldwide energy system. Another determining factor has been an increase in changed uses of the soil, principally deforestation for agricultural purposes.” [Pope Francis – Laudato Si, [5/24/15](#)]

Encyclical: “There Is An Urgent Need To Develop Policies So That, In The Next Few Years, The Emission Of Carbon Dioxide And Other Highly Polluting Gases Can Be Drastically Reduced.” According to Laudato Si by Pope Francis, “There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. Worldwide there is minimal access to clean and renewable energy. There is still a need to develop adequate storage technologies. Some countries have made considerable progress, although it is far from constituting a significant proportion.” [Pope Francis – Laudato Si, [5/24/15](#)]

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND ITS LEADERS DENIED CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BLOCKED ACTION TO PROTECT THE PLANET AND ENVIRONMENT

Talking Points Memo Headline: “Speaker Boehner Won’t Say If He Believes Climate Change Science.” [Talking Points Memo, [1/15/15](#)]

- **TPM: “Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) Was Asked The Same Question And Did Not Answer It.”** According to Talking Points Memo, “Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) was asked the same question and did not answer it.” [Talking Points Memo, [1/15/15](#)]

Boehner “Demurred When Asked Whether Francis’ Views, Made Public In An Encyclical Released Thursday, Might Spur Legislative Action By The Republicans Who Run Congress.” According to the Associated Press, “House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, a Catholic who invited the pontiff to address Congress later this year, said the pope is not afraid to challenge thinking on various issues. ‘I respect his right to speak out on these important issues,’ Boehner said, but he demurred when asked whether Francis’ views, made public in an encyclical released Thursday, might spur legislative action by the Republicans who run Congress.” [Associated Press, [6/18/15](#)]

Think Progress: In 2009, Boehner “Said The ‘Idea That Carbon Dioxide Is A Carcinogen That Is Harmful To Our Environment Is Almost Comical.’” According to Think Progress, “Boehner has expressed doubt that man-made climate change is occurring in the past — in 2009, he said the ‘idea that carbon dioxide is a carcinogen that is harmful to our environment is almost comical.’[...] Carbon dioxide, for the record, is not thought to cause cancer, though you would not want to breathe in high levels of it. The gas is a pollutant because of the effect that emitting it has on the atmosphere, and human health and welfare.” [Think Progress, [5/29/14](#)]

New York Times Headline: “McConnell Urges States To Help Thwart Obama’s ‘War On Coal’” [New York Times, [3/19/15](#)]

New York Times: Sen. Mitch McConnell Waged “An Aggressive Campaign To Block President Obama’s Climate Change Agenda In Statehouses And Courtrooms Across The Country.” According to The New York Times, “Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has begun an aggressive campaign to block President Obama’s climate change agenda in statehouses and courtrooms across the country, arenas far beyond Mr. McConnell’s official reach and authority.” [New York Times, [3/19/15](#)]

McConnell “Told Foreign Countries To Think Twice Before Entering Into The United Nations’ Climate Pact.” According to The Hill, “Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) told foreign countries to think twice before entering into the United Nations’ climate pact. McConnell’s statement came after the Obama administration submitted its plan to cut the United States’ greenhouse gases as much as 28 percent as part of the international agreement.” [The Hill, [3/31/15](#)]

Think Progress: “In An Effort To Undermine International Negotiations Aimed At Combating Climate Change,” McConnell Told “Countries Not To Trust President Obama’s Promise To Significantly Reduce... Emissions.”

According to Think Progress, “In an effort to undermine international negotiations aimed at combating climate change, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) is telling other countries not to trust President Obama’s promise to significantly reduce the United States’ carbon emissions.” [Think Progress, [4/1/15](#)]

Think Progress: “This Is Not The First Time McConnell Has Sought To Prevent The United States’ Efforts To Fight Climate Change, A Phenomenon Which He Refuses To Say He Accepts Scientifically.” According to Think Progress, “This is not the first time McConnell has sought to prevent the United States’ efforts to fight climate change, a phenomenon which he refuses to say he accepts scientifically. Earlier this month, McConnell told individual states to openly defy the EPA’s proposed rules limiting greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.” [Think Progress, [4/1/15](#)]

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell “Joined The Subcommittee Of The Appropriations Committee Responsible For Funding The EPA... Specifically To Be In A Position To Oversee The EPA’s Budget.” According to an opinion by Sen. Mitch McConnell for Cincinnati.com, “For years, the Obama administration and its overzealous bureaucratic regulators at the EPA have waged a war against Kentucky coal jobs, miners and their families. And I’ve vowed to do all I can to stop them. I’m pleased to report that recently the Senate Appropriations Committee, on which I serve, took an important step toward using Congress’s power of the purse to rein in the agency on several fronts, efforts that should help those not only in the coal industry but also farmers and Kentucky job creators. Earlier this year, I joined the subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee responsible for funding the EPA. I joined this subcommittee specifically to be in a position to oversee the EPA’s budget and to protect Kentucky jobs.” [Mitch McConnell – Cincinnati.com, [7/8/15](#)]

- **McConnell: “I Was Able To Secure A Number Of Policy Provisions... That Seek To Scale Back The Overreach Of The EPA.”** According to an opinion by Sen. Mitch McConnell for Cincinnati.com, “For years, the Obama administration and its overzealous bureaucratic regulators at the EPA have waged a war against Kentucky coal jobs, miners and their families. And I’ve vowed to do all I can to stop them. I’m pleased to report that recently the Senate Appropriations Committee, on which I serve, took an important step toward using Congress’s power of the purse to rein in the agency on several fronts, efforts that should help those not only in the coal industry but also farmers and Kentucky job creators. Earlier this year, I joined the subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee responsible for funding the EPA. I joined this subcommittee specifically to be in a position to oversee the EPA’s budget and to protect Kentucky jobs.” [Mitch McConnell – Cincinnati.com, [7/8/15](#)]
- **McConnell: If Enacted, The Bill Would “Restrict The EPA From Using Its Funding To Force States To Submit An Implementation Plan” And “Prevent Funding For A New Ozone Rule.”** According to an opinion by Sen. Mitch McConnell for Cincinnati.com, “The provisions I included in the bill that passed the Appropriations Committee would guarantee that governors who heeded my warning would be protected. If enacted, the measure I secured would restrict the EPA from using its funding to force states to submit an implementation plan. [...] I also inserted language in the bill to prevent funding for a new ozone rule that would have a serious detrimental effect on jobs and electricity prices until certain thresholds are met. The language would prohibit the EPA from regulating a standard for ozone or ‘smog’ levels until at least 85 percent of counties nationwide that are not currently complying are able to do so.” [Mitch McConnell – Cincinnati.com, [7/8/15](#)]

2014: McConnell Filed A “Resolution Of Disapproval Under The Congressional Review Act To Nullify” New EPA Climate Change Regulations. According to the National Journal, “Senate Republicans are launching a legislative attack against President Obama’s climate-change agenda on the same day it faces scrutiny from a Senate committee. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is invoking a rarely used legislative tool to try to block EPA’s climate-change regulations. McConnell, who faces a tough reelection campaign this year, filed on Thursday a resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act to nullify the Environmental Protection Agency’s proposed rule clamping down on carbon emissions of the nation’s power plants. This move could force a Senate vote within the next couple of months on the cornerstone of President Obama’s climate-change agenda. The CRA, used successfully just once since its creation in 1996, allows senators to bypass the majority leader and force an up-or-down vote requiring only 51 votes to pass to stop regulations.” [National Journal, [1/16/14](#)]

- **S.J.Res. 30, “A Joint Resolution To Disapprove A Rule Of The Environmental Protection Agency Relating To Greenhouse Gas Emissions From Electric Utility Generating Units,” Had 41 Republican Cosponsors.** According to Congress.gov, S.J.Res. 30, “A joint resolution to disapprove a rule of the Environmental Protection Agency relating to greenhouse gas emissions from electric utility generating units,” had 41 Republican cosponsors. [S.J.Res. 30 via Congress.gov, accessed [9/1/15](#)]

In June 2015, The House Passed The Ratepayer Protection Act, Which Would “Delay The Implementation Of The Clean Power Plan.” According to KAKE.com, “The Environmental Protection Agency is under attack again from Congressional Republicans, this time over a plan the Obama administration enacted last year to cut down on greenhouse gases. [...] [Rep. Ed] Whitfield introduced a bill called the Ratepayer Protection Act to delay the implementation of the Clean Power Plan until the Supreme Court rules if the regulations are constitutional. [...] The Ratepayer Protection Act passed the House on Wednesday by 247-180.” [KAKE.com, [6/24/15](#)]

- **H.R.2042, The Ratepayer Protection Act Of 2015, Had 63 Republican Co-Sponsors.** According to Congress.gov, H.R.2042, the Ratepayer Protection Act of 2015, had 63 Republican co-sponsors. [H.R.2042 via Congress.gov, accessed [9/2/15](#)]

Income Inequality

POPE FRANCIS CALLED INCOME INEQUALITY A “SCANDAL” AND THE “ROOT OF SOCIAL EVIL,” PUSHING FOR ACTION TO END IT

Francis: “Poverty In The World Is A Scandal. In A World Where There Is So Much Wealth, So Many Resources To Feed Everyone, It Is Unfathomable That There Are So Many... Poor Persons.” According to the National Catholic Reporter, “As a Vatican press release today reports, Francis said: ‘Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons. Poverty today is a cry. We all have to think if we can become a little poorer, all of us have to do this.’” [National Catholic Reporter, [6/7/13](#)]

Francis: “Inequality Is The Root Of Social Evil.” According to a tweet from Pope Francis, “Inequality is the root of social evil.” [Pope Francis – Twitter, [4/28/14](#)]

Francis: “A Way Has To Be Found To... Close The Gap Between The Affluent And Those Who Must Be Satisfied With The Crumbs Falling From The Table.” According to an address from Pope Francis to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “The initiatives and possible solutions are many, and are not limited to the increasing of production. It is a well-known fact that current levels of production are sufficient, yet millions of people are still suffering and dying of starvation. This, dear friends is truly scandalous. A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being.” [Pope Francis Remarks, [6/20/13](#)]

Francis: “Today We Also Have To Say ‘Thou Shalt Not’ To An Economy Of Exclusion And Inequality. Such An Economy Kills.” According to an Exhortation from Pope Francis, “Just as the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say ‘thou shalt not’ to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality. Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.” [Pope Francis – Evangelii Gaudium, [11/24/13](#)]

Francis: “Some People Continue To Defend Trickle-Down Theories... This Opinion, Which Has Never Been Confirmed By The Facts, Expresses A Crude And Naïve Trust... Meanwhile, The Excluded Are Still Waiting.” According to an Exhortation from Pope Francis, “In this context, some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system. Meanwhile, the excluded are still waiting. To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for that selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed.” [Pope Francis – Evangelii Gaudium, [11/24/13](#)]

REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADERS PRETENDED TO CARE ABOUT INCOME INEQUALITY WHILE OPPOSING POLICIES TO ADDRESS IT

Coalition On Human Needs Blog Headline: “McConnell And Boehner Address Income Inequality... But Not Really.” [CHN.org, [1/28/15](http://chn.org/1/28/15)]

Coalition On Human Needs: “How Can You Be FOR Helping Middle-Class Families While Being AGAINST The Proposals That Would Actually Help Them?” According to a blog post by the Coalition on Human Needs, “Really? How can you be FOR helping middle-class families while being AGAINST the proposals that would actually help them? And that’s just the start of the Head Smacking. Talk is one thing. Action is another.” [CHN.org, [1/28/15](http://chn.org/1/28/15)]

CHN: “Speaker Boehner’s House Passed A Budget Proposed By Rep. Paul Ryan... That Would Drastically Cut Human Needs Programs That Keep People Out Of Poverty.” According to a blog post by the Coalition on Human Needs, “Last year, Speaker Boehner’s House passed the a budget proposed by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) that would drastically cut human needs programs that keep people out of poverty and convert Medicaid and SNAP/food stamps into rigidly limited block grants.” [CHN.org, [1/28/15](http://chn.org/1/28/15)]

CHN: “As For A Minimum Wage Increase, Speaker Boehner Refused To Ever Bring The Issue Up For A Vote In The House, While Republicans In The Senate – Including Sen. McConnell – Blocked A Vote On It.” According to a blog post by the Coalition on Human Needs, “As for a minimum wage increase, Speaker Boehner refused to ever bring the issue up for a vote in the House, while Republicans in the Senate – including Sen. McConnell – blocked a vote on it last April, despite the fact that it would have meant a bigger pay check for nearly 28 million workers and their families.” [CHN.org, [1/28/15](http://chn.org/1/28/15)]

CHN: “If This Their Idea Of Addressing Income Inequality, We Definitely Have Our Work Cut Out For Us.” According to a blog post by the Coalition on Human Needs, “Unless advocates band together and make our voices heard louder and stronger than before, it seems like not much of it will, at the expense of low-income people struggling in America. If this is their idea of addressing income inequality, we definitely have our work cut out for us.” [CHN.org, [1/28/15](http://chn.org/1/28/15)]

New Republic Headline: “John Boehner Believes Income Inequality Is A Problem. But The GOP Doesn’t Have A Solution.” [New Republic, [5/13/14](http://newrepublic.com/5/13/14)]

New Republic: “Republicans Like Paul Ryan And Eric Cantor Have Repeatedly Tried To Pivot From Income Inequality To Mobility In Recent Months.” According to the New Republic, “Those comments may seem rote for a Republican, but they are in fact pretty unusual. For instance, in the Republican response to the State of the Union, House Republican Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers said, ‘The President talks a lot about income inequality. But the real gap we face today is one of opportunity inequality.’ Republicans like Paul Ryan and Eric Cantor have repeatedly tried to pivot from income inequality to mobility in recent months.” [New Republic, [5/13/14](http://newrepublic.com/5/13/14)]

New Republic: “I Visited The House GOP Website For More Information. There Wasn’t Much. The Site Didn’t Have A Section On Income Inequality.” According to the New Republic, “In Texas, Boehner argued against raising the minimum wage, but was short on specific policy prescriptions for closing the gap between the rich and poor. So I visited the House GOP website for more information. There wasn’t much. The site didn’t have a section on income inequality, but under ‘Middle Class Squeeze’ I found a page titled ‘Increasing Wages and Take Home Pay,’ which contained only two paragraphs about the “job-killing” effect of Obamacare’s employer mandate.” [New Republic, [5/13/14](http://newrepublic.com/5/13/14)]

New York Times’ Andrew Rosenthal Opinion: “Mr. McConnell’s Claim That Republicans Want To Tackle Income Inequality Lacks Any Kind Of Credibility. Unless Of Course He Means They Want To Make It Worse.” According to an opinion by Andrew Rosenthal for the New York Times, “As Talking Points pointed out, that’s not true, and Mr. McConnell’s claim that Republicans want to tackle income inequality lacks any kind of credibility. Unless of course he means they want to make it worse.” [Andrew Rosenthal – New York Times, [1/26/15](http://nytimes.com/1/26/15)]

CBPP: The Ryan Budget Would “Add 25 Million People To The Ranks Of The Uninsured By Repealing Health Reform, Turn Medicaid And SNAP Into Block Grants And Drastically Cut Their Funding, And Significantly Cut Other Programs Serving Low-Income Americans.” According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, “Ultimately, the Boehner rule would compel policymakers to adopt program cuts of unprecedented severity, like those in the House-passed

budget resolution authored by Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI). The Ryan budget would cut non-defense discretionary programs by \$1.1 trillion below the stringent caps imposed by the Budget Control Act, replace guaranteed Medicare benefits with ‘premium support’ vouchers, raise the age of eligibility for Medicare, add 25 million people to the ranks of the uninsured by repealing health reform, turn Medicaid and SNAP into block grants and drastically cut their funding, and significantly cut other programs serving low-income Americans.” [CBPP, [10/4/13](#)]

2013: House Republicans Proposed A Budget With “Benefits Flowing Disproportionate To Very Wealthy Households.” According to The Washington Post, “The tax plan embedded in the House Republican budget would cut taxes by \$5.7 trillion over the next decade, with the benefits flowing disproportionately to very wealthy households, according to a new analysis by the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center. Taxpayers earning more than \$1 million a year would benefit the most from the GOP tax plan, the analysis shows, reaping an average \$400,000 tax break that would send their after-tax income soaring by nearly 20 percent. Meanwhile, taxpayers earning between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year — closer to the national average — would see their taxes cut by about \$666 on average, increasing their after-tax income by less than 2 percent.” [Washington Post, [3/15/13](#)]

- **2014: The GOP Budget Called For “Reducing Taxes On The Wealthy.”** According to the National Journal, “The House on Thursday narrowly passed Rep. Paul Ryan's Republican budget, which includes \$5.1 trillion in spending cuts over 10 years without closing tax loopholes, as Ryan and other GOP leaders averted a potentially embarrassing defeat on the bill because of party defections. The measure passed 219 to 205, with 12 Republicans joining all Democrats in voting no. [...] Ryan's budget calls for reducing taxes on the wealthy—individuals would have just two rates, 25 percent and 10 percent—and cutting the corporate tax rate to 25 percent. But it does not lay out a detailed route to those goals or even embrace a recent one proposed by Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp of Michigan.” [National Journal, [4/10/14](#)]

The House Voted To “Repeal The Estate Tax,” Which Impacted “Roughly 0.2 Percent Of The 2.6 Million Deaths Expected In The U.S. This Year.” According to The Hill, “The House voted Thursday to repeal the estate tax, a longtime priority of Republicans that also spurred Democratic charges that the GOP is in the pockets of the rich. The 240-179 vote broke down largely on partisan lines, with seven Democrats voting to repeal the estate tax and three Republicans voting against it. [...] Killing off the estate tax would increase the deficit by \$269 billion over a decade. The Joint Committee on Taxation projects that the estate tax will hit 5,400 estates in 2015, or roughly 0.2 percent of the 2.6 million deaths expected in the U.S. this year. Under current law, individuals with estates of under \$5.43 million this year, and couples with \$10.86 million estates, are exempt from paying the tax. Estates pay a maximum rate of 40 percent on the amount of assets above those levels.” [The Hill, [4/16/15](#)]

Immigration

POPE FRANCIS “URGED COMPASSION FOR IMMIGRANTS” AND “RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF WALKING ACROSS THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER TO SHOW SUPPORT”

Huffington Post Headline: “Pope Francis: Immigrant Children Must Be ‘Welcomed And Protected.’” [Huffington Post, [7/15/14](#)]

Huffington Post: “Pope Francis Confronted The ‘Racist And Xenophobic Attitudes’ That Often Face Undocumented Immigrants.” According to the Huffington Post, “Pope Francis confronted the ‘racist and xenophobic attitudes’ that often face undocumented immigrants by addressing the thousands of unaccompanied children included in their ranks.” [Huffington Post, [7/15/14](#)]

Huffington Post: “Pope Francis Urged Compassion For Immigrants... In What Was Billed As A Highly Symbolic And ‘Dramatic Pro-Immigrant Outing.’” According to the Huffington Post, “Pope Francis urged compassion for immigrants on Monday, during his first official trip outside Rome since his election in March. In what was billed as a highly symbolic and ‘dramatic pro-immigrant outing,’ Francis celebrated mass on Lampedusa, an island in the southern Mediterranean that has become a safe haven for African migrants seeking passage to Europe. The plight of the migrants, many of whom are killed attempting to cross the sea, has been a ‘thorn in the heart,’ the Pope said.” [Huffington Post, [7/8/13](#)]

Pope Francis: “We Pray For A Heart Which Will Embrace Immigrants. God Will Judge Us Upon How We Have Treated The Most Needy.” [Pope Francis – Twitter, [7/8/13](#)]

Huffington Post: “The Pope Raised The Possibility Of Walking Across The U.S.-Mexico Border To Show Support For Immigrants.” According to the Huffington Post, “Pope Francis told a group of reporters Monday that he doesn’t plan to travel to Mexico this year. But next time he does visit, the pope raised the possibility of walking across the U.S.-Mexico border to show support for immigrants, according to a report from Spanish newswire EFE.” [Huffington Post, [1/20/15](#)]

Francis: “To Enter The United States From The Border With Mexico Would Be A Beautiful Gesture Of Brotherhood And Support For Immigrants.” According to the Huffington Post, “‘To enter the United States from the border with Mexico would be a beautiful gesture of brotherhood and support for immigrants,’ Francis told reporters aboard the papal airplane returning to Rome from the Philippines.” [Huffington Post, [1/20/15](#)]

REPUBLICANS REFUSED TO PASS COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM AND ATTACKED PRESIDENT OBAMA’S EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

Washington Times Headline: “A Year After Immigration Reform Push, Boehner Aims To Cancel Obama Amnesty.” [Washington Times, [1/13/15](#)]

Washington Post Headline: “Boehner Refuses To Act On Immigration Reform.” [Washington Post, [11/6/14](#)]

Washington Post: “In June 2013, The U.S. Senate Passed An Immigration Overhaul With 68 Votes... The Legislation Went To The House, Where It Promptly Died. Boehner... Backed Down.” According to the Washington Post, “Okay, here’s the thing. In June 2013, the U.S. Senate passed an immigration overhaul bill with 68 votes. That’s an unheard-of tally in gridlocked Washington. The legislation went to the House, where it promptly died. Boehner (R-Hostage) backed down after the more vocal minority in his majority revolted. By June 2014, the president was in the Rose Garden announcing that he was going to take executive action because Boehner ‘informed me that Republicans will continue to block a vote on immigration reform at least for the remainder of this year.’” [Washington Post, [11/6/14](#)]

Washington Times Headline: “McConnell Says No Immigration Deal This Year.” [Washington Times, [8/6/15](#)]

Sen. Mitch McConnell Said He Preferred To Defund President Obama’s Immigration Executive Actions. According to the Huffington Post, “McConnell announced the plan for a stand-alone bill after Senate Democrats for the fourth time blocked a House-passed bill that would fund DHS and stop an array of Obama’s immigration policies. McConnell didn’t reveal next steps for DHS funding legislation, and said his preference remains passing the House measure.” [Huffington Post, [2/23/15](#)]

The Hill Headline: “Don’t Count On McConnell To Make A Deal On Immigration.” [The Hill, [2/18/15](#)]

McConnell Voted “No” On Cloture For The McCain-Kennedy “Comprehensive Immigration Reform” Bill. According to Senate.gov, “On the cloture motion” for S. 1639, “A bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes” on June 28, 2007, Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) voted against the cloture motion. [S. 1639 via Senate.gov, [6/28/07](#)]

2015: Sen. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell Said That He Would Not Bring Up Immigration Legislation “In This Congress.” According to Roll Call, “President Barack Obama won’t get to sign an immigration bill, per Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. ‘Not in this Congress,’ McConnell said when asked about the prospects for immigration legislation.” [Roll Call, [8/6/15](#)]

The GOP Attached Language To “Overturn President Obama’s Executive Actions On Immigration” To A Homeland Security Funding Bill. According to The Hill, “The Senate on Tuesday failed to move forward with legislation overturning President Obama’s executive actions on immigration after Democrats united to block it. Most of the Senate’s 55 Republicans backed the motion to proceed to the House bill in a 51-48 vote, but GOP Sen. Dean Heller (Nev.) voted against even considering the legislation. Senate GOP Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) switched his vote to no to preserve his ability to bring the legislation back to the floor. [...] The language reversing Obama’s executive actions is attached to legislation funding the Homeland Security Department through the end of the fiscal year.” [The Hill, [2/3/15](#)]

The House Of Representatives Passed The “Enforce The Law For Sanctuary Cities Act” That Would “Deny Federal Funding To Cities That Refuse To Report Detained Immigrants.” According to The Washington Post, “Three weeks ago, the Republican-controlled House passed the ‘Enforce the Law for Sanctuary Cities Act’ (H.R. 3009). The bill would deny federal funding to cities that refuse to report detained immigrants, also known as ‘sanctuary cities.’” [Washington Post, [8/13/15](#)]

- **The Enforce The Law For Sanctuary Cities Act Had 44 Republican Co-Sponsors.** According to Congress.gov, H.R.3009, Enforce the Law for Sanctuary Cities Act had 44 Republican co-sponsors. [H.R.3009 via Congress.gov, accessed [9/2/15](#)]

Social Security / Medicare

POPE FRANCIS SAID THAT A “JUST ECONOMY” REQUIRED SOCIAL SECURITY AND COVERAGE FOR A “DIGNIFIED RETIREMENT”

Pope Francis: “A Just Economy Must Create The Conditions For Everyone... To Enjoy A Dignified Retirement As They Grow Older.” According to a speech from Pope Francis to the World Meeting of Popular Movements, “A just economy must create the conditions for everyone to be able to enjoy a childhood without want, to develop their talents when young, to work with full rights during their active years and to enjoy a dignified retirement as they grow older. It is an economy where human beings, in harmony with nature, structure the entire system of production and distribution in such a way that the abilities and needs of each individual find suitable expression in social life.” [Pope Francis Remarks via Vatican Radio, [7/9/15](#)]

Pope Francis: “Every Worker, Be He Or Not In The Formal System Of Salaried Work, Has The Right To Fitting Remuneration, To Social Security And To Retirement Coverage.” According to a speech from Pope Francis to the World Meeting of Popular Movements, “Henceforth every worker, be he or not in the formal system of salaried work, has the right to fitting remuneration, to social security and to retirement coverage. Here there are cardboard <dweller>, recyclers, peddlers, seamstresses, artisans, fishermen, rural workers, builders, miners, recovered business laborers, all sorts of members of cooperatives and workers in popular jobs who are excluded from labor rights, who are denied the possibility of joining labor unions, who have no adequate and stable income. Today I want to join my voice to yours and support you in your struggle.” [Pope Francis Remarks via Zenit, [10/29/14](#)]

REPUBLICANS JUMPED AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY POSSIBLE TO UNDERMINE SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE, INCLUDING THE MASSIVE CUTS SPURRED BY THE BOEHNER RULE AND RYAN BUDGET

Speaker John Boehner Had A Lifetime Score Of 3% From The Alliance For Retired Americans. According to the 2014 Voting Record for the Ohio Delegation released by the Alliance for Retired Americans, Speaker John Boehner had a lifetime score of 3% for the ARA. [retiredamericans.org, accessed [9/1/15](#)]

Sen. Mitch McConnell Had A Lifetime Score Of 7% From The Alliance For Retired Americans. According to the 2014 Voting Record for the Kentucky Delegation released by the Alliance for Retired Americans, Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell had a lifetime score of 7% for the ARA. [retiredamericans.org, accessed [9/1/15](#)]

Boehner Was The Namesake Of The “Boehner Rule,” Which Demanded “That Any Increase In The Debt Limit Be Accompanied By Equal Or Larger Reductions In Spending.” According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, “Some House members are urging Speaker John Boehner to resurrect the so-called ‘Boehner Rule,’ which demands that any increase in the debt limit be accompanied by equal or larger reductions in spending. Speaker Boehner has said, as recently as late August, that ‘we’re not going to increase the debt limit without cuts and reforms that are greater than the increase in the debt limit,’ although it’s not clear if that remains his current position.” [CBPP, [10/4/13](#)]

CBPP: “Ultimately, The Boehner Rule Would Compel Policymakers To Adopt Program Cuts Of Unprecedented Severity, Like Those In The House-Passed Budget Resolution Authored By... Paul Ryan.” According to the Center

for Budget and Policy priorities, “Ultimately, the Boehner rule would compel policymakers to adopt program cuts of unprecedented severity, like those in the House-passed budget resolution authored by Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI). The Ryan budget would cut non-defense discretionary programs by \$1.1 trillion below the stringent caps imposed by the Budget Control Act, replace guaranteed Medicare benefits with ‘premium support’ vouchers, raise the age of eligibility for Medicare, add 25 million people to the ranks of the uninsured by repealing health reform, turn Medicaid and SNAP into block grants and drastically cut their funding, and significantly cut other programs serving low-income Americans.” [CBPP, [10/4/13](#)]

CBPP: “The Ryan Budget Would ... Replace Guaranteed Medicare Benefits With ‘Premium Support’ Vouchers, Raise The Age Of Eligibility For Medicare.” According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, “Ultimately, the Boehner rule would compel policymakers to adopt program cuts of unprecedented severity, like those in the House-passed budget resolution authored by Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI). The Ryan budget would cut non-defense discretionary programs by \$1.1 trillion below the stringent caps imposed by the Budget Control Act, replace guaranteed Medicare benefits with ‘premium support’ vouchers, raise the age of eligibility for Medicare, add 25 million people to the ranks of the uninsured by repealing health reform, turn Medicaid and SNAP into block grants and drastically cut their funding, and significantly cut other programs serving low-income Americans.” [CBPP, [10/4/13](#)]

Center For Economic And Policy Research’s Beat The Press Blog Headline: “Boehner Wants CUTS To Social Security And Medicare, Not ‘Changes.’” [Beat The Press – Center for Economic and Policy Research, [12/17/12](#)]

The 2016 GOP Budget Made “Changes To Important Social Programs Such As Medicaid, Social Security, And Medicare,” Including A “Shift Of Funds” That Would “Hasten The Insolvency Of The Social Security Retirement Fund.” According to Forbes, “Congressional Republicans recently released their 2016 budget, grabbing headlines across the country with their renewed call to repeal the Affordable Care Act, cut spending, and overhaul Medicare. While many of the proposals are merely a response to President Obama’s proposed 2016 budget, which also included some degree of political positioning, the budget does put the American public on notice as to how our elected leadership envisions future changes to important social programs such as Medicaid, Social Security, and Medicare. [...] The proposal argues that the Social Security Old Age and Survivors Insurance Fund should not be used to help fund the looming potential shortfall in Social Security Disability trust fund that is expected to occur by the end of 2016. While a shift of funds could push out the insolvency of the Disability Insurance fund into the future, it would also hasten the insolvency of the Social Security retirement fund. Consequently, this short-term fix would provide little benefit in the long run.” [Forbes.com, [3/17/15](#)]

Workers’ Rights

POPE FRANCIS STOOD IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE RIGHTS OF LABORERS AND DECRIED DENYING WORKERS UNION MEMBERSHIPS

Pope Francis: “Here There Are... Workers In Popular Jobs Who Are Excluded From Labor Rights, Who Are Denied The Possibility Of Joining Labor Unions... Today I Want To... Support You In Your Struggle.” According to a speech from Pope Francis to the World Meeting of Popular Movements, “Henceforth every worker, be he or not in the formal system of salaried work, has the right to fitting remuneration, to social security and to retirement coverage. Here there are cardboard <dwelling>, recyclers, peddlers, seamstresses, artisans, fishermen, rural workers, builders, miners, recovered business laborers, all sorts of members of cooperatives and workers in popular jobs who are excluded from labor rights, who are denied the possibility of joining labor unions, who have no adequate and stable income. Today I want to join my voice to yours and support you in your struggle.” [Pope Francis Remarks via Zenit, [10/29/14](#)]

Francis: “Do We Realize That Something Is Wrong In A World Where There Are... So Many Laborers Without Rights, So Many Persons Whose Dignity Is Not Respected?” According to excerpts from a speech by Pope Francis via Reuters, “Do we realize that something is wrong in a world where there are so many farm workers without land, so many families without a home, so many laborers without rights, so many persons whose dignity is not respected?” [Pope Francis Remarks via Reuters, [7/9/15](#)]

REPUBLICANS DEMONIZED UNIONS, ENDORSED NATIONAL RIGHT-TO-WORK-FOR-LESS LAWS, AND UNDERMINED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR UNIONS

Speaker John Boehner Said “The Current System Of Collective Bargaining Is Too Tilted In Favor Of Labor Unions.” According to the Huffington Post, “House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) weighed in on the labor protests rocking the Midwest on Sunday, saying that the current system of collective bargaining is too tilted in favor of labor unions.” [Huffington Post, [3/1/11](#)]

Boehner: “In Some Of These States, You’ve Got Collective Bargaining Laws That Are So Weighted In Favor Of The Public Employees That There’s Almost No Borrowing.” According to the Huffington Post, “In some of these states, you've got collective bargaining laws that are so weighted in favor of the public employees that there's almost no bargaining,” Boehner said in an interview with David Brody of the Christian Broadcasting Network. ‘We've given them a machine gun and put it right at the heads of the local officials and they really have their hands tied. And I think what you're seeing in these states is they're trying to bring some balance to these negotiations that when you look at the pay of public employees today and you look at their retirement benefits they are way out of line with many other working Americans.’” [Huffington Post, [3/1/11](#)]

Boehner: “We’ve Given” Unions “A Machine Gun And Put It Right At The Heads Of Local Officials And They Really Have Their Hands Tied.” According to the Huffington Post, “In some of these states, you've got collective bargaining laws that are so weighted in favor of the public employees that there's almost no bargaining,” Boehner said in an interview with David Brody of the Christian Broadcasting Network. ‘We've given them a machine gun and put it right at the heads of the local officials and they really have their hands tied. And I think what you're seeing in these states is they're trying to bring some balance to these negotiations that when you look at the pay of public employees today and you look at their retirement benefits they are way out of line with many other working Americans.’” [Huffington Post, [3/1/11](#)]

Think Progress Headline: “GOP Senate Leader Endorses National Union-Busting Law.” [Think Progress, [2/6/13](#)]

Think Progress: “Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell... Announced Today His Support For A National ‘Right-To-Work’ Legislation Introduced By Fellow Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul.” According to Think Progress, “Republicans typically voice concern about federal intrusion on states’ rights and the government’s intervention in agreements between employers and their workers. But Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has apparently cast those concerns aside, as he announced today his support for a national ‘right-to-work’ legislation introduced by fellow Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul (R).” [Think Progress, [2/6/13](#)]

Think Progress: “Unions In Kentucky Have Played A Big Role In Protecting Workers In The State’s Factories And Coal Mines, And National Unions Have Made Strong Pushes For Better Mine Safety Laws That... McConnell... Opposed.” According to Think Progress, “It’s worth noting that Kentucky, the state both McConnell and Paul claim to represent, does not have a right-to-work law on its books. And though just 10.3 percent of the state’s workers are unionized, unions in Kentucky have played a big role in protecting workers in the state’s factories and coal mines, and national unions have made strong pushes for better mine safety laws that both [Mitch] McConnell and [Rand] Paul have opposed.” [Think Progress, [2/6/13](#)]

Kentucky AFL-CIO Op-Ed: “McConnell Is Gunning For More Than Senate Majority Leader. He Wants To Be The Senate’s Union-Buster-In-Chief, Too.” According to an opinion by Berry Craig for Kentucky AFL-CIO, “Mitch McConnell and the RPK are counting on some union help. They want union votes. But they’ll settle for union stay-at-homes on election day. McConnell is gunning for more than senate majority leader. He wants to be the senate's union-buster-in-chief, too. [Berry Craig – Kentucky AFL-CIO, accessed [9/2/15](#)]

McConnell “Said The Growth Of Public Sector Unions Has Created ‘An Inherent And Undeniable Tension Between Those Who Believe In Limited Self-Government And Those Who Stand To Benefit From Its Growth.’” According to The Hill, “[Mitch] McConnell said the growth of public sector unions has created ‘an inherent and undeniable tension between those who believe in limited self-government and those who stand to benefit from its growth.’” [The Hill, [6/21/13](#)]

McConnell “Called For A ‘Serious National Debate’ About The Unions, Arguing That Their Existence Is A Big Part Of Why There Is So Little Trust In Government.” According to The Hill, “He [Mitch McConnell] called for a ‘serious national debate’ about the unions, arguing that their existence is a big part of why there is so little trust in government.” [The Hill, [6/21/13](#)]

McConnell “Agreed With The Assessment That ‘Public Sector Unions Are A 50-Year Mistake,’ And Said Their Creation Has Led To A ‘Fleeing’ Of Taxpayers Through A Vast Expansion Of Government.” According to The Hill, “[Mitch] McConnell said he agreed with the assessment that ‘public sector unions are a 50-year mistake,’ and said their creation has led to a ‘fleeing’ of taxpayers through a vast expansion of government.” [The Hill, [6/21/13](#)]

2014: Sen. Mitch McConnell Introduced Legislation To “Reform” The National Labor Relations Board. According to The Hill, “Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) vowed that if Republicans take control of the Senate, reforming the National Labor Relations Board would be a top priority. ‘Everybody’s familiar with the president’s unconstitutional effort to pack the National Labor Relations Board with liberal partisans in early 2012,’ McConnell said on the Senate floor Tuesday. ‘It’s time to restore balance to the National Labor Relations Board. Let’s take the politics out of it.’ McConnell endorsed a bill from Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), the NLRB Reform Act.” [The Hill, [9/16/14](#)]

- **The NLRB Reform Act Would “Make Important Changes In The Board’s Decision-Making Process As Well As In Litigation.”** According to Bloomberg, “A bill introduced Sept. 16 by Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and co-sponsored by Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) would enlarge the National Labor Relations Board from five to six members and make important changes in the board’s decision-making process as well as in litigation before the NLRB and the federal courts. The proposed National Labor Relations Board Reform Act (bill number not yet available) would divide the board seats between the two major political parties and would phase in a new appointment and confirmation procedure for board members. In a step Alexander said “will require both sides to find a middle ground,” a four-member majority would be required for a quorum and to make an NLRB determination in representation cases and unfair labor practice proceedings. The bill would significantly change the authority of the NLRB’s general counsel. Parties would be able to file federal court challenges as soon as the general counsel issued, or even authorized, unfair labor practice complaints, and courts could halt further proceedings if they determined the general counsel lacked substantial evidence showing violations of the National Labor Relations Act. [BNA.com, [9/18/14](#)]

Congress Passed A “Resolution Of Disapproval” Against New National Labor Relations Board Voting Rules.

According to USA Today, “President Obama vetoed a congressional resolution seeking to overturn new unionization voting rules Tuesday, keeping in place procedures that will allow a more streamlined process for workers to vote to unionize. Republicans said those new rules would allow for ‘ambush elections,’ and tried to roll back the new National Labor Relations Board rule with a congressional resolution of disapproval. [...] The resolution passed the Senate 53 to 46 and the House 232 to 186, with all Democrats and three Republicans voting no.” [USA Today, [3/31/15](#)]

2013: The GOP Passed A Bill To “Loosen Federal Overtime Laws” And Offer “‘Comp’ Time Instead Of Pay.”

According to the Huffington Post, “As part of their efforts to rebrand the GOP as a more caring party, House Republicans passed a hotly debated bill Wednesday that would loosen federal overtime laws, allowing for ‘comp’ time instead of pay for private-sector employees who work more than 40 hours in a week. Although GOP legislators made a strong public-relations push for the bill as worker-friendly legislation, the measure is not expected to go anywhere in the Democrat-controlled Senate, and the White House said Monday that the president would be advised to veto such legislation on the grounds that it would weaken protections in the Fair Labor Standards Act. Republican leaders should have expected as much, considering the same measure has been rejected by Democrats at least twice in the past. If nothing else, the legislation has provided House Republicans with the opportunity to voice concern for working mothers struggling to strike a good work-life balance. The measure passed by a vote of 223-204 along party lines.” [Huffington Post, [5/8/13](#)]

- **The Bill Could “Dilute The Primary Governor On The 40-Hour Week And Pressure Workers Into Taking Comp Time Rather Than Pay.”** According to the Huffington Post, “Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Depression-era statute that serves as the bedrock of U.S. labor law, hourly workers must be paid time-and-a-half for every hour they work over 40 in a week -- both to reward workers for their extra hours and to discourage employers from pushing workers too hard. The Republican measure would instead give employers and their workers the choice to use earned ‘comp’ time instead of pay, an opportunity already afforded many public-sector employees. [...] By lowering the cost of overtime for employers, labor advocates worry the measure would dilute the primary governor on the 40-hour week and pressure workers into taking comp time rather than pay, even if their choice is ostensibly protected by law. The bill would give workers the option to “cash out” their accrued comp time at a later date if they choose, but Democrats noted that such a situation would amount to an interest-free loan for employers.” [Huffington Post, [5/8/13](#)]

Minimum Wage

POPE FRANCIS: “NOT PAYING A JUST [WAGE]... GOES AGAINST GOD!”

Pope Francis: “Not Paying A Just [Wage], Not Providing Work, Focusing Exclusively On The Balance Books, On Financial Statements, Only Looking At Making Personal Profit. That Goes Against God!” According to Vatican Radio, “Not paying a just [wage], not providing work, focusing exclusively on the balance books, on financial statements, only looking at making personal profit. That goes against God! How many times – how many times – have we read in 'L'Osservatore Romano' A headline that impressed me so much the day of the Bangladesh tragedy, 'Living on 38 euros a month': this was the payment of these people who have died ... And this is called 'slave labor!'. And today in this world there is slavery that is made with the most beautiful gift that God has given to man: the ability to create, to work, to be the makers of our own dignity. How many brothers and sisters throughout the world are in this situation because of these, economic, social, political attitudes and so on.” [Pope Francis via Vatican Radio, [1/5/13](#)]

REPUBLICANS CONSISTENTLY VOTED AGAINST MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES; SPEAKER BOEHNER SAID IN 1996 HE WOULD “COMMIT SUICIDE” RATHER THAN VOTE FOR A CLEAN MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

Speaker John Boehner Once Said He Would Rather “Commit Suicide” Than Vote For A Minimum Wage Increase. According to The Hill, “Speaker John Boehner is so against raising the minimum wage that he once said he would rather commit suicide than vote for a ‘clean’ increase. [...]Boehner made the comments about suicide in an April 1996 interview with The Weekly Standard. ‘I’ll commit suicide before I vote on a clean minimum-wage bill,’ Boehner, then the head of the House Republican Conference, said at the time. Four months later, President Clinton over Boehner’s objections signed a minimum wage hike into law that lifted the wage by 90 cents, from \$4.25 per hour to \$5.15.” [The Hill, [2/21/14](#)]

Boehner Voted Against Minimum Wage Increases In 1996 And 2007. According to The Hill, “[John] Boehner made the comments about suicide in an April 1996 interview with The Weekly Standard. ‘I’ll commit suicide before I vote on a clean minimum-wage bill,’ Boehner, then the head of the House Republican Conference, said at the time. Four months later, President Clinton over Boehner’s objections signed a minimum wage hike into law that lifted the wage by 90 cents, from \$4.25 per hour to \$5.15. It wasn’t a clean wage hike because it included some Republican sweeteners such as tax breaks aimed at small businesses. The bill passed the Senate, 76-22 and cleared the House, 354-72. Boehner voted no. Boehner voted against the wage hike again in 2007, when Democrats took over the House majority and in one of their first actions voted to lift the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour.” [The Hill, [2/21/14](#)]

Mitch McConnell Told A Koch Brothers Summit That When He Was Senate Majority Leader, The Senate Would Not “Be Debating All These Gosh Darn Proposals. That’s All We Do In The Senate Is Vote On Things Like Raising The Minimum Wage.” According to Think Progress, “[Mitch] McConnell spoke at an annual event hosted by oil billionaires Charles and David Koch at the St. Regis Monarch Bay resort in Dana Point, CA. The conference, titled ‘American Courage: Our Commitment to a Free Society,’ reportedly attracted hundreds of the nation’s wealthiest individuals and aimed to raise \$500 million toward making McConnell the Senate majority leader next year and another \$500 million to defeat a potential Hillary Clinton presidential campaign. McConnell, who has been attacked by his opponent for voting 17 times against minimum wage increases, made it clear that under his leadership there would not be any increase in the current \$7.25 federal minimum wage. ‘And we’re not going to be debating all these gosh darn proposals. That’s all we do in the Senate is vote on things like raising the minimum wage,’ he told the billionaires in attendance.” [Think Progress, [8/27/14](#)]

McConnell Voted 17 Times Against Raising The Minimum Wage. According to the Lexington Herald-Leader, “Democrat Alison Lundergan Grimes has set aside her folksy, light-hearted television ad series ‘Questions for Mitch’ in favor of a traditional attack ad as recent polls show her losing ground in a tight race with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. ‘What can happen in 30 years?’ asks a narrator in the ad, which was airing in Lexington on Thursday. ‘A senator can become a multi-millionaire in public office while voting 17 times against raising the minimum wage, three times for corporate tax breaks that send Kentucky jobs overseas and 12 times against extending unemployment benefits for laid-off workers.’” [Lexington Herald-Tribune, [8/15/14](#)]

2014: Senate Republicans “Blocked Legislation... That Would Increase The Federal Minimum Wage.” According to The Hill, “Senate Republicans on Wednesday blocked legislation from Democrats that would increase the federal minimum

wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 an hour. The Senate voted 54-42 to end debate on a motion to proceed to the Minimum Wage Fairness Act, short of the 60 votes that were needed.” [The Hill, [4/30/14](#)]

- **The Bill Wouldn’t Have Passed The House Because “Republican Leaders Have Said They Won’t Consider A Bill That Doesn’t Include Reforms To Job Training Programs.”** According to The Hill, “Even if the Senate had passed a minimum-wage increase, House Republican leaders have said they won’t consider a bill that doesn’t include reforms to job training programs, such as the SKILLS Act. Republicans have argued that low wages aren’t the problem with the economy because there aren’t enough jobs in the first place. Democrats countered that 28 million people would have seen their wages increase if Harkin’s bill had passed, while the federal government would save \$4.6 billion a year from people no longer qualifying for safety net programs such as food stamps.” [The Hill, [4/30/14](#)]

2013: The House GOP “Voted Unanimously Against Raising The Federal Minimum Wage.” According the Huffington Post, “House Republicans voted unanimously against raising the federal minimum wage Friday. A proposal by Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) to raise the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour over the next two years and increase the wage for tipped employees to 70 percent of the minimum wage was defeated, with every House Republican voting against the motion.” [Huffington Post, [3/15/13](#)]