



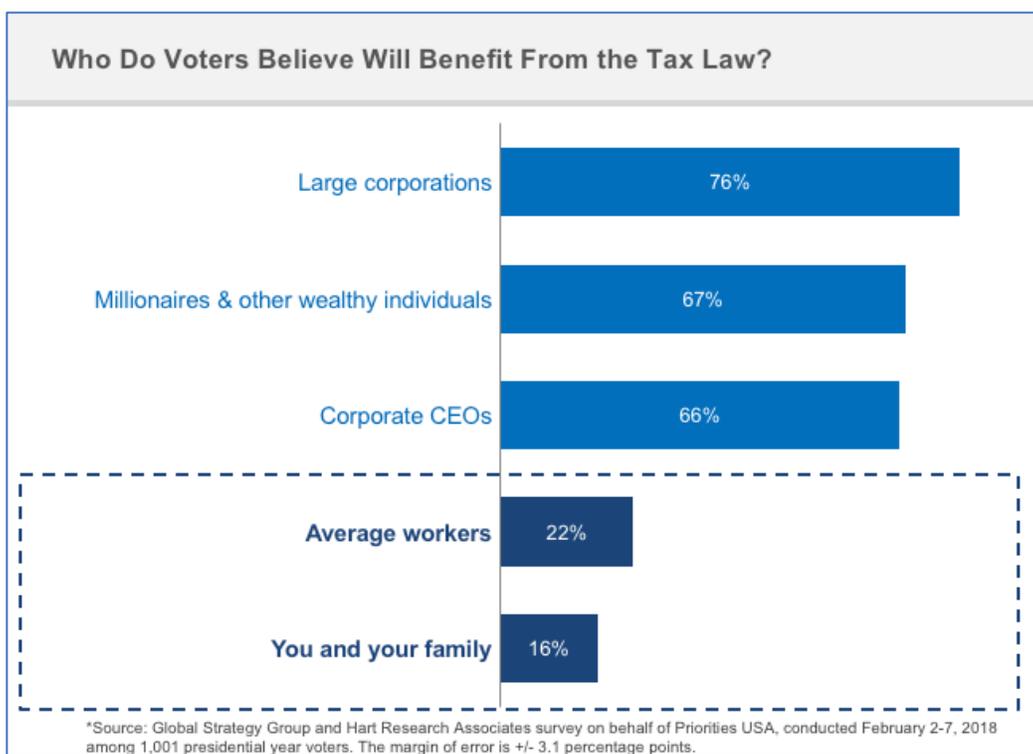
From: Margie Omero, GBA Strategies & Bryan Bennett, Not One Penny Campaign
To: Interested Parties
Date: February 26, 2018
Re: Engaging the Tax Debate is Imperative for Progressives

The conventional wisdom in Washington is that the recently passed GOP tax law is growing significantly in popularity and conservatives are winning over the minds of voters on their economic vision. While there has been an increase in support for the law over the past couple of months, a closer evaluation of public opinion finds progressives are in a strong position to win the debate on taxes and will only lose if they fail to strongly contest conservative arguments about the benefits of the plan. The law still lacks support from most Americans in spite of millions of dollars in advertising being spent to convince voters, who fundamentally believe the wealthy and large corporations will be the biggest beneficiaries while they will see little personal benefit. More than that, we know which messages progressives can and should be using that will most effectively litigate this debate, and moving forward, they should be taking the case to the American people and can make the tax law a liability – not an asset – for conservatives.

This analysis is based on a new national survey conducted online from February 9-17, 2018 by GBA Strategies on behalf of Not One Penny among 2,000 registered voters, as well as a review of 17 other public surveys conducted in January and February 2018 since passage of the tax law.

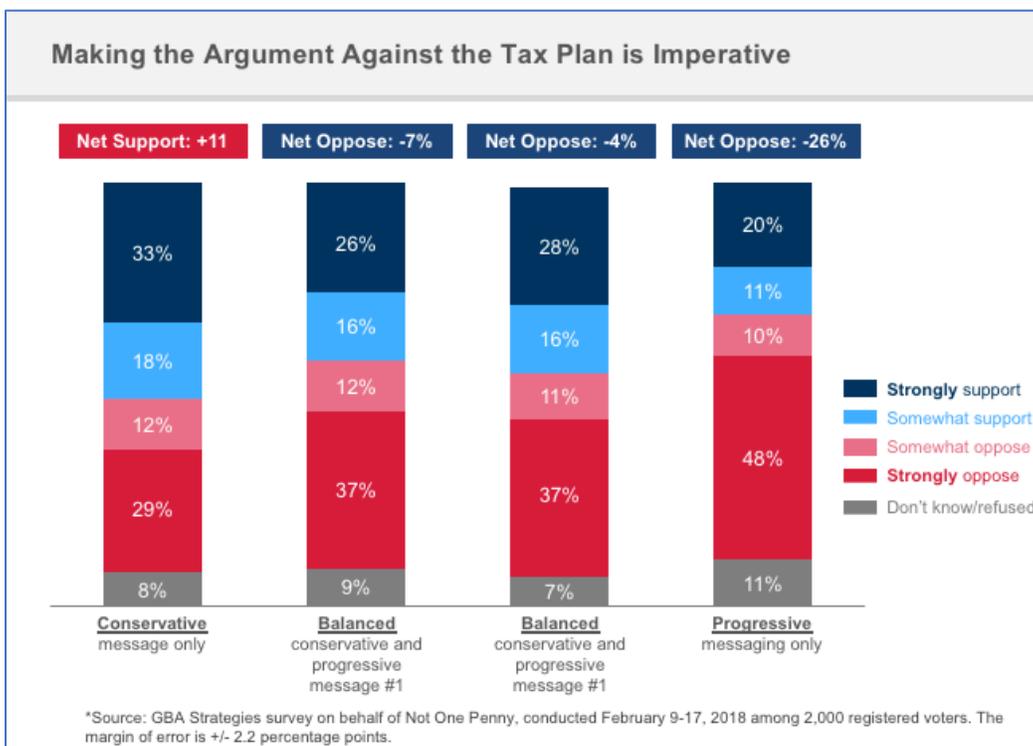
Support For the Tax Plan Has Risen Since Passage, Yet Remains Unpopular: Prior to the tax plan passing, the bill was [averaging support from just 33 percent](#) of Americans and garnering opposition from 52 percent in December 2017, making it the [second-most unpopular piece of legislation](#) in modern history (next to the failed ACA repeal effort). However, since being signed into law, there is no question there has been marginal improvement in support. In an average of seventeen polls conducted in January/February 2018, average support has risen 6 percent – but despite this improvement, just 39 percent of Americans on average are supportive of the tax plan. Notably, though many believe the tax plan is becoming a strength for conservatives, the bigger shift has come from declining opposition (down to 41 percent on average) into a large segment who are unsure (22 percent on average). The new survey conducted by GBA Strategies for Not One Penny confirms that not only is support for the law underwater, with just 40 percent supporting, 44 percent opposing, and 16 percent being unsure, but intensity of opposition (33 percent strongly oppose) is much greater than the intensity of support (21 percent strongly support). *Now is a critical moment for progressives to define the tax law on our terms.*

Americans Overwhelmingly Believes the Tax Plan Benefits the Wealthy and Corporations Most. Public opinion [over the past year](#) has consistently shown that voters think large corporations and wealthy Americans pay less than their fair share of taxes. When the tax debate went into full swing this past fall, not only did two-thirds of Americans believe [the wealthy would benefit most](#) from this plan, but 61 percent agreed that the tax plan favors the rich *at the expense of* the middle class. And now, after the law has been enacted, voters are still predisposed to believe the wealthy and corporations will be rewarded while the middle class sees little benefit. [Research commissioned by Priorities USA](#) and conducted by Global Strategy Group and Hart Research Associates earlier this month found 76 percent believe large corporations will benefit a lot, 67 percent think the same for millionaires and billionaires, but just 22 percent think the average worker will benefit a lot and only 16 percent think they and their family will. All of this, in spite of over \$100 million being spent to promote the bill, shows how resistant voters are to the conservative frame of the law. *Progressives must continue driving home the message that this law further enriches the wealthy while hurting the middle class.*



Conservatives are Promoting Benefits from the Plan, But Voters Are Not Seeing Them – and Don’t Expect To. Conservatives are trying to attribute every decision by a company to provide bonuses or wage increases to the tax plan in their effort to sell it to the public while at the same time [playing down layoffs](#) and companies investing overwhelmingly in [stock buybacks](#) to enrich executives rather than rewarding their workers. Their attempt at overinflating the actual impact of the tax law may partially explain the marginal increase in support, but voters are not seeing much of the benefit, and are not inclined to believe they ever will. A January [Reuters/Ipsos survey](#) found just 2 percent of Americans had received a bonus from law. Further, research conducted by [SurveyMonkey for The New York Times](#) – which did register support for the plan at 51 percent, the highest of any survey and the only poll showing a majority of Americans supporting the plan – found just 33 percent expect to see an income tax cut, 20 percent expect to see a salary increase, and only 8 percent expect to get a bonus (or increased bonus) as a result of the plan. *Progressives should be constantly and consistently countering the conservative message about benefits the middle class will receive from the tax law.*

Progressives Can Win the Argument on Taxes - Avoiding the Issue Will Be Costly. Failing to vigorously engage in the tax debate will make the law a strength for conservatives and a liability for progressives. The new survey by GBA Strategies on behalf of Not One Penny demonstrates how important it is for progressives to make their case against the law. If voters are only exposed to conservative messaging focusing on Americans receiving bonuses and seeing more money in their paychecks, support moves a net 15 points in favor of the plan, 52 percent support to 41 percent oppose (from 40 percent support – 44 percent oppose). But when voters are exposed to both conservative messaging and progressive messaging, opposition continues to outpace support.



Furthermore, once voters that had only seen conservative messaging are asked to evaluate messaging against the plan, they end up moving strongly against the plan, catching up to the same levels of opposition as voters exposed to the balanced pairing of messaging. This aligns with previous research Clarity Campaign Labs conducted on behalf of Not One Penny and Protect Our Care, which found that communicating on taxes can move voters against the tax plan in swing Congressional districts, particularly among Latinos, independents, and suburban voters. *Progressives have a significant opportunity to fully engage on the issue and can move the public against the plan.*

Progressive Messaging is Extremely Effective at Winning Over Reachable Voters. Recent research has found that progressive messaging is extremely effective, and voters are susceptible to viewing nearly all of our arguments against the tax plan credibly. The research conducted for Priorities USA (by Global Strategy and Hart) and Not One Penny (by GBA Strategies) both find that arguments focused on how the tax bill hurts the middle class, how it enriches the wealthy and large corporations, and how it targets important programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and education for deep cuts give voters the most serious doubts. *Progressives making these types of arguments can shift the debate against the tax bill.*

Targeting important programs to pay for the tax law:

- *“Because this plan adds so much to the deficit, Medicare and Medicaid will become prime targets for deficit reduction. We’ll end up cutting health care for children and the elderly in order to pay for tax cuts for the richest 1 percent.”* (GBA: 46% very serious doubts; 61% total)
- *“While giving huge tax cuts to the wealthy and big corporations, Donald Trump has proposed cutting programs that help young people and workers succeed in the 21st century economy. Trump’s proposed budget would cut work-study programs, college loan programs, career and technical education, and programs to reduce student debt.”* (GSG/Hart: 57% major concerns)



Hurting the middle class:

- *“This plan will actually raise taxes on the middle class. Over the next few years, when the plan is fully phased in, taxes will be raised on more than half of American households.”* (GBA: 45% very serious doubts; 59% doubts)

Enriches the Wealthy and Large Corporations:

- *“The wealthy keep getting wealthier while the middle class falls further behind. But in a few years, 83 percent of the tax breaks from this plan will go to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans.”* (GBA: 44% very serious doubts; 59% doubts)
- *“Donald Trump’s policies are exploding the federal budget deficit and national debt. His tax plan alone would add \$1.5 trillion dollars to the debt, all to give huge tax cuts to the wealthy and big corporations.”* (GSG/Hart; 58% major concerns)