

FIRST 100 DAYS REPORT: TRUMP'S BROKEN PROMISES TO RURAL AMERICA



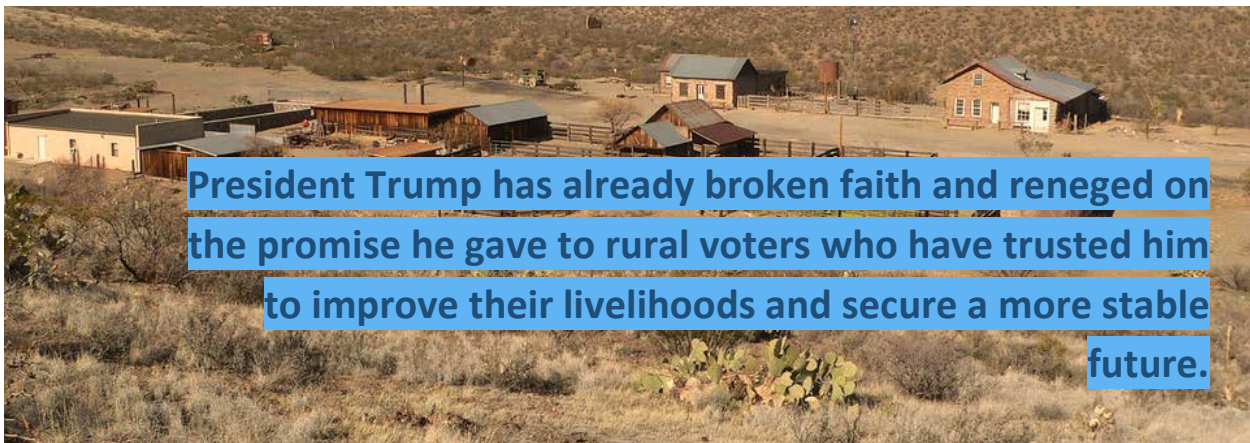
U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee

Ranking Member Martin Heinrich
Minority Staff Report, April 2017



First 100 Days Report: Trump Fails Rural Voters Who Put Their Trust in Him

April 29 marks the 100th day of the Trump presidency, an important benchmark for assessing the President's productivity and ability to enact pieces of his campaign agenda. Rural Americans voted for President Trump believing in the promise that he will invest in and put their communities first.ⁱ He had promised that "the forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer."ⁱⁱ Instead, in his first 100 days President Trump has already broken the promise to help rural America. From his budget that cuts services rural communities rely on to TrumpCare, which disproportionately harms rural areas, President Trump has already broken faith with rural voters who have trusted him to improve their livelihoods and secure a more stable future.



UNDERMINING SERVICES RURAL RESIDENTS NEED

President Trump's budget eliminates several programs that rural families rely on and targets others for deep cuts. Programs like those below are vital and help rural communities, many of which experience higher than average levels of poverty and are faced with limited opportunities.ⁱⁱⁱ

- Many rural families rely on Department of Agriculture (USDA) water and wastewater infrastructure project funding for access to clean water. Yet the President's budget proposes a 21 percent cut to the USDA, which jeopardizes these important programs;^{iv}
- The President's budget would eliminate funding for the Essential Air Service program that helps small communities maintain access to air travel—a cut of \$175 million;^v and
- The budget eliminates the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which helped over 6 million households in FY 2014, and the Weatherization Assistance Program, which cuts energy bills for recipients by an average of about \$437.^{vi} Rural households typically spend a higher share of their income on utilities.^{vii}

In addition, the fact that the Secretary of Agriculture was the last announced secretary nomination suggests that rural areas are not a priority for President Trump.^{viii}

HURTING THE HEALTH OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

President Trump's actions on health care would benefit CEOs and other top earners at the expense of rural America. Rural Americans are more likely to be uninsured, and among the uninsured, they are more likely to suffer from ill health.^{ix} Instead of implementing policies that would help rural communities, President Trump has doubled down on traditional Republican policies that would take health care away from rural communities.

- The negative effects of TrumpCare would have disproportionately fallen on rural communities, many of which already have limited access to health care services.^x Rural Americans are more likely to receive coverage from both individual insurance markets and Medicaid.^{xi} If the Republican bill passed, 2.9 million rural Americans would have lost coverage by 2020.^{xii}
- TrumpCare would have further burdened rural hospitals, one-third of which are already at risk of closing.^{xiii} Rural hospitals are more dependent on Medicaid funds than their urban counterparts and would be disproportionately hurt by the proposed Medicaid cuts.
- Medicaid expansion helped maintain profitability for rural hospitals and in combination with the Affordable Care Act, decreased the costs of care that are not covered by insurance.^{xiv} If TrumpCare had passed, many rural hospitals might have closed and new uncompensated care just from private insurance losses could cost over \$7 billion nationally in 2018.^{xv}

TRUMP'S 100 DAY REPORT CARD

- ✓ UNDERMINING SERVICES RURAL RESIDENTS NEED
- ✓ HURTING THE HEALTH OF RURAL COMMUNITIES
- ✓ UNDERMINING WORKERS' ECONOMIC FUTURE
- ✓ UNDERMINING THE WELL-BEING OF PUBLIC LANDS

UNDERMINING WORKERS' ECONOMIC FUTURE

Rural communities still have not regained the jobs lost during the recession, while urban areas are back above pre-recession employment levels.^{xvi} Instead of bringing back jobs to these communities, President Trump is taking actions that undermine industries growing in rural America and making workers less safe in the industries he claims he supports. President Trump's actions towards coal miners are an example of where he will hurt the rural workers who are relying on him. Miners are twice as likely to live in rural areas as other workers: 25 percent of miners are rural residents compared to 12 percent of workers in other industries.^{xvii}

President Trump claims that he will bring back coal jobs by dismantling the Clean Power Plan (CPP), a set of regulations that would have reduced carbon pollution from power plants. However, the decline in coal jobs is not due to these recent regulations that have not even gone into effect.^{xviii} The CPP would have pushed the United States further towards developing clean, renewable energy, creating new, high-quality jobs in high-growth industries all across this country. By revoking the CPP, President Trump is hurting the ability of rural areas to develop growing industries. Renewable energy now employs more than one in three Americans who work in electricity generation and fuel production employment.^{xix}



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimated that the Clean Power Plan could create at least 52,000 energy efficiency jobs by 2030.^{xx} The plan also would have helped workers not miss 160,000 days of work each year due to health issues that arise from lower air quality.^{xxi} Using the average hourly wage for private-sector workers, that works out to over \$33 million dollars in wages each year.^{xxii}

His budget would also cut funding for job training, meaning that at a time when it is increasingly important that workers train for the jobs of the future, they will receive no help from President Trump's administration.^{xxiii}

The Trump administration and Congressional Republicans have also taken actions to undermine the safety of miners.

- The Trump administration delayed implementation of a rule requiring that miners are assured of a safe workplace environment before they begin work.^{xxiv} Under the Obama administration, miners experienced the safest years in history.^{xxv}
- President Trump's disregard for worker safety threatens this progress. For example, there have already been more coal mining deaths this year than this time last year.^{xxvi} Congressional Republicans also overturned an Obama-era regulation allowing OSHA to cite employers that do not keep track of injuries or illnesses experienced by workers on the job, making it easier for bad actors to skate by.^{xxvii}

President Trump's actions stand to only benefit mining companies and CEOs, while exploiting hard-working Americans and destabilizing the future of our economy.



UNDERMINING THE WELL-BEING OF PUBLIC LANDS

Actions that jeopardize the health and longevity of public lands can affect rural residents. President Trump has shown little interest in maintaining public lands, instead taking actions that would make it easier for companies to extract profits from land that belongs to all of us.

- Congressional Republicans have announced plans to undo the Obama administration’s methane rule, which limited venting and leaking of methane from oil and gas operations on public lands.^{xxviii} This rule would have prevented a loss of \$23 million annually to the federal government and states.^{xxix}
- Revoking the methane rule will ensure that rural communities will continue to suffer the health effects of pollution. Air pollution can cause stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and respiratory diseases such as asthma, resulting in huge impacts on the economy, costing \$131 billion in just 2011.^{xxx}
- The Trump administration overturned the Stream Protection Rule,^{xxxi} which would have prevented coal companies from dumping hazardous waste into vital water streams. Overturning the rule increases possible ill effects on rural communities. The Trump administration also revoked a rule improving management of public lands.^{xxxii}



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