Opinion

Guest Voices



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks as he signs executive orders and proclamations in the Oval Office at the White House April 9, 2025, in Washington. (OSV News/Reuters/Nathan Howard)



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President Donald Trump is attempting to push through his budgetary and tax priorities in one huge bill that is going to be a disaster for America. He refers to it as his "big, beautiful bill."

It will add trillions of dollars to the federal debt, give tax breaks to the very wealthy and cut programs that help the middle class and the least advantaged. And it will enshrine in law the draconian cuts in federal programs instituted by Elon Musk as part of the Department of Government Efficiency.

The Congressional Budget Office projects the tax cuts in the bill will cost $3.7 trillion over 10 years, while the spending cuts amount to $1.3 trillion, leaving $2.4 trillion added to the federal deficit, much to the embarrassment of Republican fiscal hawks. House Republicans argue the tax cuts will stimulate the economy so tax revenues will increase, but such voodoo economics have been proved wrong by experience and economic studies.

The Trump administration, like barbarians and terrorists, is capable of destroying but not building. It has turned on its head the Gospel imperative of caring for the most vulnerable, and cares only for the rich and powerful.

Most of the tax cuts in the House Republican bill go to the very wealthiest classes. "Wealthy heirs, owners of multimillion-dollar partnerships, and private equity investors would be among the big winners from the expanded tax breaks for wealthy

households," according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

People earning more than $1 million a year would reap an $89,390 tax cut, according to the center. The top 1% of taxpayers would get a $64,770 cut, but those in the bottom 20% would get only $90. The next 20% would gain only $640.

But aren't workers helped by exempting tips, which is also a provision of the bill? Not really. The tip exemption only applies to income taxes and not payroll taxes. It will not help those who are too poor to pay income taxes and will give little help to those in the bottom tax brackets.

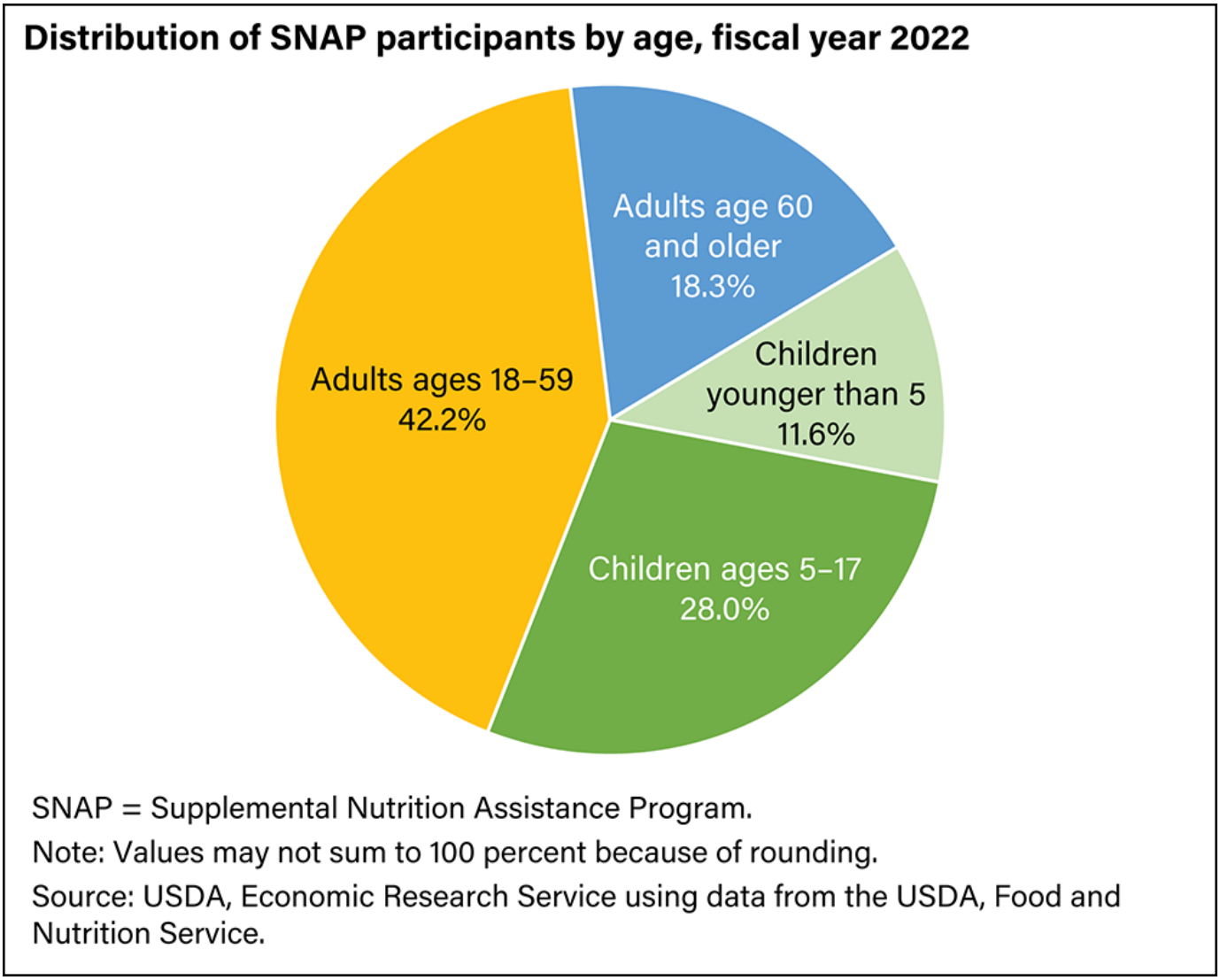
Those most helped will likely be blackjack dealers in Las Vegas. We can also expect to see employers using the tax exemption as an excuse to pressure customers to increase tips as an alternative to raising salaries.

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Employees would be better off with an increase in the minimum wage or an increase in the earned income tax credit, which would help all workers, not just those who get tips.

To partially pay for the tax cuts for the rich, Trump and House Republicans want to cut government programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid and student loan programs.

About 40% of SNAP recipients are children, and that program will be cut by nearly $300 billion at a time when food prices have gone up.



"Distribution of SNAP participants by age, fiscal year 2022" (Graphic courtesy of USDA)

The House bill also cuts funds for Medicaid and Affordable Care Act marketplaces by about $1 trillion, which is going to hurt low-income households. The Congressional Budget Office estimates 16 million people could lose health insurance because of these cuts by 2034. Rural hospitals are especially dependent on Medicaid payments for their survival.

The bill also cuts $535 billion over 10 years from Medicare, the federal insurance program for seniors.

Meanwhile, Musk has gutted the federal workforce, making it difficult for the government to administer its programs. The ensuing chaos has forced the Trump

administration to rehire some of those fired. Medical and scientific research has also been decimated. Progress in cancer research has been halted. But the Mars program, which employs Musk's corporations, has been spared — for now.

American universities and scientific research were once the envy of the world, but now they are being crippled by the Trump administration. This self-inflicted wound is doing more damage to our country than our foreign adversaries could hope to do.

Damage from the Trump administration is also being felt around the world with the destruction of American aid programs. PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, is no longer working, and as a result, over 100,000 additional deaths related to HIV/AIDS are estimated to occur this year. By 2030, the number is expected to grow to 3 million. Even if the program is restored, the infrastructure for distributing medication, which took years to build, is gone because of cuts to the United States Agency for International Development.

Rather than a preferential option for the poor, the Trump administration has a preferential option for the rich. Rather than honoring humble love, it glorifies arrogant power.

We used to think of the White House as a bully pulpit, but now it is simply occupied by a bully.

This story appears in the **Trump's Second Term** feature series. View the full series.