



## Trump Child Care Plan Announced

“These are the kinds of solutions I want to bring to the White House as your president,” said Republican nominee Donald Trump, in announcing his plan to expand government child care in the United States.

Because of this, it is important that we closely examine what Trump is proposing in the way of child care, as it should give us an idea of the types of policies he will suggest to Congress, should he defeat Hillary Clinton in November.



“Those in leadership must put themselves in the shoes of the laid-off factory worker, the family worried about security, or the mom struggling to afford childcare. That means we need working mothers to be fairly compensated for their work, and to have access to affordable, quality child care for their kids. We want higher pay, better wages, and a growing economy for everyone,” Trump said at a rally in the Philadelphia suburb of Aston.

Pennsylvania has been a state that Republicans have struggled to win in recent years, despite western Pennsylvania often being described by political pundits as “Alabama.” One might recall that President Barack Obama, when as a candidate in 2012, expressed frustration at those in that part of the state that clung to their guns and their religion. Yet, when the votes of overwhelmingly Democratic Philadelphia have rolled in, the state has wound up in the Democrat column.

The suburbs of Philadelphia have been seen as key to flipping the state to the Republicans, and many view issues such as child care as a way that could be done.

“For many families in our country, childcare is now the single largest expense — even more than housing,” Trump told the rally Tuesday night.

Trump presented his policy to address this problem. “The first part of my childcare plan allows every parent or family in America — including adoptive parents and foster parent guardians — to deduct their childcare expenses from their income taxes.”

According to a “fact sheet” put out by the Trump campaign, “The Trump plan will rewrite the tax code to allow working parents to deduct from their income taxes child care expenses for up to four children and elderly dependents.” As an example, for a family earning \$70,000 per year in the 12-percent tax bracket with \$7,000 in child care expenses, the deduction would reduce taxes by \$840 per year.

“Importantly, our policy also supports mothers who choose to stay at home, and honors and recognizes their incredible contributions to their families and to our society,” Trump explained, saying that families with a stay-at-home parent “will be able to fully deduct the average cost of child care from their taxes.”

For low-income individuals who have no net income tax liability, Trump said, “We will offer an expanded Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in the form of a childcare rebate.... This translates to as much as an extra \$1,200 in EITC benefits for working families.”

Another proposal by Trump is to allow “every parent in America to open up a Dependent Care Savings



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Account. Families can contribute up to \$2,000 a year to these accounts completely tax-free.” Trump added, “The money that is put into these accounts can also be spent not only on child care, but also child enrichment activities. Additionally, the funds in these accounts do not expire at the end of the year — they don’t revert to employers or to the Treasury. Instead, the funds rollover — so while only \$2,000 can be contributed each year, unspent sums can accumulate and create substantial savings.”

To help lower-income parents, “The government will match half of the first \$1,000 deposited per year,” according to the Trump campaign “fact sheet.”

Then, Trump said his plan will include “incentives” for employers to offer child-care “on-site.” Trump said, “Currently, only seven percent of employers provide these services. Our plan will expand tax deductions for employers, allow companies to pool resources to provide shared childcare services, and remove needless requirements that have prevented employers from using the credit.”

According to the Trump “fact sheet,” this will be “particularly helpful to women, low-income workers and minorities, who are statistically more likely to reduce time working outside the home in order to provide unpaid care.”

At a town hall event last year in Iowa, Trump said business should do this. “It’s not expensive for a company to do it. You need one person or two people, and you need some blocks and you need some swings and some toys.”

While Trump spoke of removing regulations on business, he also proposed requiring businesses to provide six weeks of paid maternity leave. Trump predicted that this part of his plan “will receive strong bipartisan support, and will be completely self-financing.” There is little doubt that such a plan will garner support from the Democrats in Congress, but how will it be paid for?

Trump said, “We can provide six weeks of paid-maternity leave to any mother with a newborn child whose employer does not provide the benefit,” in two ways. One way is by “recapturing fraud and improper payments in the unemployment insurance program.” Then, utilizing those savings, the Trump plan will pay maternity leave “straight out of the unemployment insurance fund.”

“This enhancement will triple the average paid leave received by new mothers,” the fact sheet claimed.

The lack of paid maternity leave is considered a major reason that the percentage of women who work outside the home in the United States is less than that found in other industrialized countries.

Tony Perkins of the conservative Family Research Council called Trump’s proposal which expands child-care help to mothers who do not work outside the home “innovative,” because it acknowledges “the contribution that stay-at-home parents make.”

But Art Thompson, CEO of the constitutionalist John Birch Society (the parent organization of *The New American*), took a different perspective on the Trump proposals, as a whole. “We must be cautious about advocating assistance that may result in the deterioration of the family, the basis of any free society. Providing assistance that keeps the mother out of the home is just as bad as assistance that keeps a father from assuming his responsibilities. Federal assistance to unwed or single mothers has encouraged women to have more children out of wedlock as well as more single-parent homes without the father. Now we are seeing growing advocacy for federal assistance and mandates encouraging more mothers to join or stay in the workforce, at least to a degree.”

According to the Trump campaign fact sheet, “The child care plan itself can more than be offset by additional growth. About two-thirds of the entire Trump tax reform program will be offset by the



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increases in economic activity” that would result by better tax policies, better trade deals, immigration reform, and “unleashing American energy.”

What about the other one-third? It will be offset by “minor changes in the trajectory of spending for federal agency operations, excluding Defense, Veterans, Social Security and Medicare.”

Of course, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton has her own plan in this area, which the Trump campaign dismisses as one that “does not meet the needs of workers in rural areas or who have schedules that require working on a night shift or on call.” The Trump campaign fact sheet contrasts its plan — which proposes six weeks of partial pay through the existing Unemployment Insurance system — with the Clinton proposal that they say would “force businesses to pay for 12 weeks of fully-paid family leave at their expense.”

Certainly business owners, in reviewing the two plans, would most likely prefer the Trump plan over that suggested by Hillary Clinton. But is this an example of the criticism enunciated so bluntly by Senator Barry Goldwater in the 1950s of the expansion of the federal government by the Republican Dwight Eisenhower administration? Goldwater noted that the “Modern Republicans” of the Eisenhower era (forerunners of the “compassionate conservatism” of President George W. Bush) always said that they could run the Welfare State cheaper than the Democrats, causing Goldwater to castigate the Eisenhower domestic policy as a “dime store New Deal.”

Business owners presently are forced to pay premiums for unemployment insurance, and if they have to provide wages for maternity leave through that program, no doubt their premiums will increase. For many struggling businesses, this is yet another mandate from government that makes it increasingly difficult to earn a profit and stay in business. Large businesses, such as the Trump organization, can no doubt better afford such a plan than a small business can.

Perhaps some readers can recall the early 1990s, when then-First Lady Hillary Clinton was pushing her “Hillary Care” healthcare plan, and it was resisted by small business owners, who protested that they simply could not afford the additional expense. Clinton dismissed their concerns by saying she could not worry about every “undercapitalized” business in the country.

An analysis by CNBC claimed that Trump’s proposal “would create a substantial tax break for working parents, but further widen the deficit.” Its analysis concluded that the child-care tax break would cost the government about \$158 billion in revenue, each year, and that a Trump administration would either have to make up with higher taxes or add to the budget deficit.

Predictably, the Clinton campaign leveled criticism at Trump’s proposals. Maya Harris, Clinton’s senior policy adviser, said, “After spending his entire career — and this entire campaign — demeaning women and dismissing the need to support working families, Donald Trump released a regressive and insufficient ‘maternity leave’ policy that is out of touch, half-baked and ignores the way Americans live and work today.”

This is illustrative of the reality that no matter how many concessions a Republican makes in the way of expanding such social programs, it will never be enough. Vivien Labaton, director of Make It Work Action, dismissed Trump’s plan as just a “drop in the bucket.”

Once the premise is accepted by a Republican president that it is the proper role of government to provide for child care for a family, we can expect such a program to be expanded in future Democrat administrations. There will always be new areas of “problems” for which progressives will offer a government “solution,” increasingly a federal solution. Yet as President Warren Harding said in 1921, in



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rejecting the philosophy of the progressives in his day, “All human ills are not curable by legislation.”

While Trump’s positions against multilateral, globalist trade deals, and against our present out-of-control immigration system can find favor with constitutionalists; and Trump’s promise to put constitutionalists on the Supreme Court and the rest of the federal judiciary is heartening, expansion of the power and scope of the federal government is something that many of these same individuals will view differently.



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