



“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane.” Martin Luther King

Budget Debate Raging in Washington

The House and Senate have spent months debating budget proposals that will decrease safety net programs. Various proposals have been drafted to cut insurance for more than 20 million people, housing vouchers for more than 250,000 low income households would be cut, 8 million families would lose food assistance. Job training cuts would affect 570,000 people and 14 million people would lose Medicaid.

At the same time these cuts to the safety net programs, congress is looking at a 5 trillion dollar tax cut for the wealthiest people in America and increasing military spending to the tune of 37 billion dollars.

Budget priorities are decided by our representatives. Often in Washington our representatives hear from those that are wealthy and well-connected. There are very well paid lobbyists that follow every move in congress and they try to influence where our tax dollars are spent.

The budget being considered in Washington would increase the homeless on our streets, reduce opportunities for those attempting to better themselves, increase the numbers of people that are food-insecure, and decrease our access to healthcare. Those who would benefit are the wealthy and the military.

Engaging now with our members of congress is important. We can stop the worst of these budget proposals with frequent contact with our elected officials. We can ask for a moral budget that does not take from the vulnerable and give to the wealthy.

Our elected officials can be contacted: Senator Roy Blunt, (202) 224-5721. Senator Claire McCaskill (202) 224-6154. Representative Billy Long, (202) 225-6536. Call and let them hear about your budget priorities.

Meet Your Local Health Care Professional; Alicia Schimmels

Alicia Schimmels works as an “ER Enhancement Specialist” at the MSU Clinic. She connects people who are frequent users of the ER to other types of healthcare, recovery and addiction services, mental health services, housing and employment services.

Alicia is married and has two children. She received her Bachelor’s degree in Counseling and Human Services from the Atlanta Christian College in 2011. She worked five years in an HIV clinic in Atlanta, GA and worked as a Community Support Specialist in Southwest Missouri addressing adolescent behavioral issues. Living and working in Atlanta in the HIV clinic she discovered that being educated was not the same as being



street smart. She felt that in Atlanta she was able to understand and empathize with the plight of low income people who were also dealing with the stigma of HIV as well as the difficulties of the illness.

Alicia was born and raised in Jamaica and came to the US in 1996. During the time she has been here she has had to adapt to local culture, both the African American culture and the wider US culture. She feels that the Jamaican culture is more collective than the US culture and there is a strong belief that education is seen as the only way to achieve a different life, one with fewer impositions by others. Education allows more opportunities.

Understanding stereotypes in the US and having to deal personally with attitudes expecting less of her as a professional have been difficult at times. “It still stings when I am mistreated based on a stereotype”.

Thank you for sharing your skills with us in Springfield, MO Alicia!