ROBERT PEOPLE
FOR CONGRESS (FL-15)
Real Change Starts With PEOPLE

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# Robert People will fight for affordability for impoverished, working class, and middle-class families and individuals. This isn't a buzzword; this is an imperative.

*In 2025, as the "representative" for district 15 in Florida, Laurel Lee voted for Donald Trump's big ugly bill and his tax plan to benefit the wealthy. She endorsed this legislation despite the many negative impacts it would have on the residents who are supposed to be her constituents. Electricity rates are up 8% since Trump took office and here in District 15, residents have been significantly impacted by increased electricity costs. 47% of Floridians already struggle to meet basic costs of living. With the addition of increased expenses due to natural disaster impacts and insurance costs, Florida's working and middle-class families are being priced out of living here.*

*Laurel Lee voted against extending ACA subsidies and made it harder for constituents to get approved for SNAP and Medicaid. She failed to speak up against tariffs which raised costs for consumers and supported the DOGE cuts which took money out of programs like USDA food bank support. Robert People will support policies to make life more affordable for constituents instead.*

## Policy Proposals

**Utility Costs:**

- Utility rate reforms to prevent for-profit companies to ban rate recovery passthrough costs
- Reasonable rates of return set by FERC
- Companies pursue cost savings over capital investments
- Continued support for rural electric cooperative loans
- Strengthen LIHEAP
- Data Center moratorium while developing regulatory framework
- Carbon pricing with household dividends

**Disaster Preparedness:**

- Fund disaster preparedness and recovery through NOAA, FEMA, NWS
- Fund BRIC program/infrastructure to improve community resilience during natural disasters

**Housing:**

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- Regulations on corporate purchasing of existing homes
- Tax breaks or grants funding for affordable housing development
- Renter support
- Down payment and closing cost assistance for first-time homebuyers

**Food:**

- Ban surveillance data and dynamic pricing at grocery stores
- Reverse Big UGLY Bill – SNAP benefits and food bank funding cuts
- Universal school breakfast and lunch

**Caregiving:**

- Universal pre-k and affordable childcare (7% of income)
- Respite funding, tax credits and FSA/HSA flexibilities for family caregivers

**Corporate Accountability:**

- Antitrust enforcement
- Fair taxes
- Overturn Citizen's United
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and Click-to-Cancel

**Taxes and Spending:**

- Tax the billionaires
- End the tariff war
- Cut war spending

**Wages and Income:**

- Living Wage, Paid Leave - See Robert People's "Worker's Rights" policy

**Healthcare:**

- Medicare for All - See Robert People's "Healthcare" policy

## Utility Costs:

**Utility Regulations:** Duke Energy's profit margins are 17% and TECO's are 19%. TECO bills have increased 86% — totaling about $980 more annually — between December 2020 and January

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2026. These utility companies are investor-owned monopolies focused on maximizing shareholder profits. Customers cannot choose their provider and the state approves rate increases. Duke and TECO's profit margins are above the industry average of 12.8% and higher than the single digit profit margins of most other industries. Florida Legislators need to address this affordability crisis and were set to do so in the 2026 legislative session with the Affordable Energy Reform Act before Florida Power and Light lobbyists persuaded them to let the bill die. Florida Legislators need to pass this bill.

At the Federal level, Robert People would support the Lowing Utility Bills Act. This bill would ban rate recovery pass through so that companies could not pass on costs for lobbying and executive perks to consumers. It would direct FERC to calculate a reasonable rate of return for utility investments and requires company to use this rate when presenting proposals to state regulatory authorities. It also requires companies to pursue cost savings investments before capital investments. Robert would also support continued funding for rural electric cooperative loans to improve infrastructure and make transitions to clean energy. These nonprofit cooperatives have transformed rural communities with affordable utility services.

**LIHEAP:** At the Federal level, one of the programs that assists low-income Americans is LIHEAP (low-income home energy assistance program). The Trump administration has put funding for this program on the chopping block in 2025 with the One Big Ugly Bill until backlash led to these cuts being reversed and they have again put this funding on the chopping block in their budget proposal in 2026. This is despite the rising fuel costs resulting from supply disruptions for oil and liquified natural gas due to the Iran War. LIHEAP provides heating and colling assistance to roughly 6.7 million households nationally. In 2025, households with children who could not afford their electric bill for at least one month of the year increased to 33.1% and 41.5% of households with children went without paying for other basic household needs to afford their bill for at least one month.

Not only do we need to fund LIHEAP at the stable, consistent level it's required for 40 years, we need to explore how to improve and strengthen the program. The beneficial impacts of LIHEAP for working class families could be improved through an increase in the allowed income cap to qualify to 250% of the poverty line which would be $82,500 for a family of four and through guidelines that allow states to provide assistance to ensure no family is paying more than 3% of their income towards energy costs. These guidelines for assistance could require weatherization assessments and remediation for continued support. They could also factor in the average energy usage per person in an area to guard against any independent household overuse of energy. Providing this assistance would also give the state data on increased costs and affordability for residents to allow for better-informed policy decisions. LIHEAP emergency assistance also needs to include cooling costs for any state where average temperatures exceed specified thresholds. LIHEAP has been

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historically focused on heating costs but as we know in Florida, high temperatures can also be detrimental to individuals' health without interventions to prevent overheating. For long-term impacts, LIHEAP assistance could include support for households to begin implementing alternative energy sources – while this will require more investment in the short-term, the implications on sustainability, affordability, and overall community impacts would likely outweigh this cost.

**Data Center Regulations:** Data centers are buildings that house computer servers used for data storage, data analytics, Artificial Intelligence, and streaming services. They present health risks and utilize limited community resources in a way that negatively impacts the residents who live nearby. They produce several forms of pollution, noise, air, and light. Noise pollution occurs as the building is constructed and after it begins operations diesel generators, heating, ventilation, and HVAC create constant hums that can be heard by neighbors and wildlife. The noise can reach 90 decibels which is loud enough to harm hearing. Large data facilities require all night lighting which can disrupt sleep patterns as well as migratory and habitat behaviors of wildlife. According to a 2025 study, air pollution of particulate matter and nitrogen oxides from data centers in 2030 could cause approximately 600,000 asthma symptom cases and 1300 premature deaths costing $20 billion.

Data centers impact resources with large data centers consuming as much as 5 million gallons of water each day, equivalent to the usage of a town of 10,000-50,000 people. Even a medium data center can consume as much as 1,000 households water usage in a year. Some of this water is required to cool servers so they do not overheat. The total water impacts are related to water use on site, water use by the power plant to provide electricity to meet the data center need, and water consumption that occurs to manufacture the processing chips. Data centers also consume electricity as large load customers drawing as much as 10,000 to 25,000 households. When utility companies have to add capacity to accommodate these types of customers, rates may increase for all users in the area and sometimes incentives to entice development limits the ability to pass those costs to the data center. "Hyperscale" data centers focused on AI consume even more of these local resources. A Meta data center planned for Wyoming is expected to use as much electricity as every house in the state combined.

Even if data centers use reclaimed or recycled water then that is no longer returning to the base flow of rivers or streams and evaporative cooling leaves salts and other contaminants impacting water quality. Data centers can use air-cooling technology to use less water but this requires more energy which means we need more energy production using clean energy sources. Alternately, data centers can use server liquid cooling as a method to cool servers that uses minimal water. The less water used at the data center the better for water supplies and for the capacity of local facilities to manage waste from evaporation. Another significant portion of the water consumed for data

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centers is by steam-generating power plants that rely on fossil fuels. In 2023, a federal report estimated that the indirect water consumption from electricity use was another 211 billion gallons of water. Each chip in a data center has used thousands of gallons of water for manufacturing before it is even installed.

To responsibly address the impacts of data centers on their local communities, we need to implement policies that put guardrails and guidelines on them. Local communities need to be involved in the decisions and need to be able to have a voice in the decision-making process. At the federal level, we need to establish rules to require that they use lower water consumption techniques for cooling their servers – liquid cooling, air cooling, or free cooling. Companies must be required to provide public disclosures on water impacts which include the secondary water use, and the companies need to pay annual fees for each thousand gallons used. These fees can be reinvested in the local community for infrastructure and environmental protection initiatives. Data centers should also be required to use wind or solar energy and invest in local grid expansion using clean energy sources. Data center construction should be required to meet ISO14001.2026 standards for environmental management systems. A moratorium on building these facilities needs to enacted until existing facilities are retrofitted appropriately and studies are completed to inform the appropriate regulations for protecting our environment and residents of these communities.

**Carbon Pricing:** Carbon pricing charges emitters for their tons of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) emissions. Thirteen states have carbon pricing policies and are successfully reducing emissions. These are cap-and-trade programs that limit the amount of CO2 that can be emitted by certain facilities. Whether through a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade program, implementing carbon pricing will incentivize businesses to transition to clean energy. The carbon pricing revenues received by the government are then distributed as dividends to American households each month and can be used however the household chooses but can offset any increased costs for goods that arise through the transition to clean energy. Robert People will support legislation to enact a federal carbon pricing model.

## Disaster preparedness:

Between 2021 and 2024, home insurance rates have increased by 24 percent nationwide. Florida homeowners have seen premiums increase 34% to 40% since 2022. Between 2020 and 2024, disasters caused by extreme weather and climate change led to 2,520 deaths and 747 billion dollars of damage. In 2024, the Tampa Bay area was hit hard by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Helene caused major damages to tens of thousands of homes and within weeks Milton followed behind causing between 21 billion and 34 billion dollars of damage. That same year, Representative Laurel Lee voted against a stopgap measure to keep funding FEMA through December 2024

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claiming it was due to the belief that continuing resolutions for budgets are inappropriate. She has consistently voted for continuing resolutions in Donald Trump's second term. Without the risk mitigation provided through disaster funding, home insurance rates will only continue to increase.

In 2025, Laurel Lee voted for the One Big Ugly Bill which rescinded funds from NOAA for financial and technical assistance to coastal states to enable preparation for extreme weather and for weather research and forecasting innovations. During his second term, Donald Trump's administration has also been delaying and denying requests for disaster assistance. As of October 2025, at least 12 state requests had been denied for aid. The administration tried to end the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC). The BRIC program began in 2018 and was extremely popular but cancelled under "waste, fraud, and abuse" measures in 2025. 20 states sued to block them. In March 2026, a judge ruled that the administration had to provide this funding. There will be two years of applicants trying to secure funds for their communities and the administration plans to prioritize "major infrastructure projects". Now that a judge has required the program to resume, there is no answer as to whether projects addressing climate change impacts will be funded.

Donald Trump's proposed 2027 budget includes deep cuts to the EPA, FEMA, and for climate resilience programs through other federal agencies. It would cut state and local preparedness funding by $1.3 billion and cut NOAA by $1.6 billion eliminating climate adaptation partnerships and resilience grants. No representative of District 15 should ever support these kinds of cuts to funding as they will have significant negative impacts on our residents. Robert People will fight to keep disaster preparedness and recovery support funded for our communities.

## Housing:

**Corporate Regulations:** The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Center for Geospatial Solutions report that corporate ownership of residential properties has reached 8.9% in 500 counties around the United States. In some communities, they own twenty percent or more. This report estimates that 15% of the single-family rental market in Tampa is owned by investors with more than 1,000 homes. While this may mean less negligence from landlords, corporations tend to raise rents at higher rates and more swiftly seek eviction. Also, while they tend to invest more upfront into properties to rent, they more often neglect maintenance needs, particularly in impoverished neighborhoods. The purchase of these homes in suburban areas by investors has reduced segregation and increased diversity by making these neighborhoods more accessible and affordable. When private equity rents out homes, new tenants tend to be less wealthy and nonwhite. This can be a pathway to accessing high-performing schools for these families. The complex issue with widespread impacts requires intervention at several levels. Local municipalities need to be empowered to make the right decisions for their communities when it

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comes to development. They also would benefit from establishing comprehensive rental registries to ensure they know who owns properties and who's responsible for their upkeep. If a local government notes that their housing market has a low supply of affordable homes and corporations are buying them all, they should be able to implement moratoriums on that practice or limitations. One law that can help is to require right of first refusal to tenants, tenant associations, nonprofits, state and local agencies whenever a landlord is going to sell a home. This allows these entities to make an offer on a home before it goes on the private market. A pilot program like this in Minnesota has led to nonprofits buying 345 homes that will be either resold to low and middle-income buyers or maintained as affordable rentals. By implementing regulations requiring right of first refusal and prohibiting corporations with more than 50 homes in inventory from purchasing houses in a shortage market where there is less than four months supply of existing homes. Additionally, investors with more than 50 homes in a market could be required to accept HUD vouchers for housing. Currently, in many communities after a years-long waits to get housing vouchers, our most vulnerable residents are left struggling to find a place to accept it.

**Affordable Housing:** One way the Federal Government supports affordable housing is through Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). These provide dollar-for-dollar federal tax liability reductions for developers who rehabilitate or construct new low or very-low-income rental housing units. The housing credit allocation can be used for ten years to subsidize either 30% or 70% of low-income unit costs. The developer must set aside a specific number of units for lower-income residents for 30 years. In the One Big Ugly Bill, the Trump Administration provided a permanent 12% increase for LIHTC which should be maintained. Unfortunately, this investment has hit roadblocks as banks have caps on their "public welfare investments" as a part of their regulatory capital. This means smaller regional banks can't lend more money to build affordable housing. There is legislation to increase this cap from 15% to 20%. This legislation needs to be passed so that these banks can support these investments and smaller community-based institutions are engaged in creating this housing instead of large corporate banks being the only option.

Additionally, grants like the HOME Investment Partnerships Program which enables local and state governments to fund affordable housing initiatives, USDA grants for rural rental assistance, the National Housing Trust Fund, and HUD 's Rental Assistance Demonstration all need continued funding. The current budget proposal from the administration would cut HUD funding by 13% and would eliminate both the HOME Investment Partnerships Program and Community Block Grants which are how local communities rehabilitate and construct affordable housing. The budget also includes work requirements and time limitations for rental assistance. Robert People will fight against these funding cuts and new barriers imposed on the vulnerable population that need this help.

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**Renter Support:** Even with affordable housing options in communities, residents still struggle to find an affordable place to rent that will accept them. Additional barriers beyond availability include minimum income requirements of 3x the rent, credit scores, and eviction records. Currently, renting housing does not reflect in credit scores. This is a significant disadvantage for many individuals who may look to improve their credit or purchase a home. While they manage to pay thousands in rent each month, they aren't considered reliable enough to pay a mortgage that may be half as much. Landlords need to be mandated or incentivized to report "positive-only" rent records to credit bureaus. If someone isn't able to consistently pay their rent on time, their credit score won't get worse and probably already reflects that financial struggle. Those that are consistently paying rent on time, however, can see an improvement in their score to reflect that financial reliability. This reporting could also then contribute to landlords using a holistic review to screen applicants so that even if they don't have 3x the rent in income, if they have a record of consistently paying a similar or lower rent amount on time, then that can be factored in to waive the 3x the rent requirement. For evictions, there need to be rules requiring "just cause" evictions and limiting the ability of a landlord to evict without a lease related issue. Lower income individuals who rent from exploitative landlords are often afraid to address maintenance needs or register issues because they are limited in other housing options and often threatened with eviction if they cause a problem. There need to be protections for these individuals where there is a requirement of a lease-related justification for the eviction and there needs to be a review process accessible to these individuals where they can have evictions sealed or expunged if they can show a court they have either provided restitution for unpaid rent or damages or that the eviction was punitive.

**First-Time Homebuyers:** To make homeownership more accessible and affordable for working and middle-class Americans, Robert People would support down payment and closing cost assistance for first-time homebuyers. By offering $25,000 of down payment assistance and closing cost assistance, Congress can help people to overcome the entry cost barriers to purchasing a home. With the unaffordability crisis that many are encountering, the ability to save for these expenses is getting worse every day. With a leg up, people can begin to feel the American dream is within reach and can begin building wealth for themselves and their families.

## Food:

**Surveillance Data and Dynamic Pricing:** Surveillance pricing uses consumer data, algorithms, and AI to set individualized prices for goods or services based on an individual consumers' behavior patterns. Dynamic pricing is when pricing fluctuates over time or in response to general market conditions. Robert People opposes surveillance pricing which allows individuals to be charged different prices for the same product or service as a result of their individual characteristics. This opens a door to discriminatory practices and the price can change as much as 23% from one

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consumer to the next. Dynamic pricing also allows for corporations to exploit consumers. These companies claim the practice isn't exploitative because they may also lower prices to encourage people to buy products. Regardless, consumers should be able to know what price a product is going to be before going to the store and that the price they are paying is the same as the next person. For this reason, Robert would support legislation to ban surveillance pricing and real time dynamic pricing by retailers.

**Food Assistance Funding:** When the Big Ugly Bill passed, with Laurel Lee's support, it included $186 billion in cuts to the SNAP program. SNAP is proven to reduce food insecurity and increase financial stability. It also contributes more to the economy than it costs. 70% of SNAP recipients are elderly, disabled, or children. Stricter work requirements were imposed by the administration and more paperwork is required as a result, which is all to create barriers so that people end up losing their benefits. In Florida, the average SNAP benefit in 2024 was $6.08 per person/day. Laurel Lee framed these policies as making these programs "stronger". It doesn't make our community or our constituents stronger to have people going hungry. The administration has also stopped tracking food insecurity through the Household Food Security Report so that while people struggle to eat, there is no way to measure the severity of the impact of these policies. 2.4 million people per month are expected to lose their SNAP benefits. Through DOGE efforts, again supported by Congresswoman Laurel Lee, $1 billion dollars were cut from USDA food bank and school programs. Even with this funding, food banks would not have been able to make up for the loss in SNAP benefits but without it, even less so. Not only did communities lose these benefits to address food insecurity but local farmers lost revenue that these programs provided. Robert People would fight to restore SNAP and USDA funding cuts to reverse these negative impacts on the people of district 15.

**Universal School Breakfast and Lunch:** No child should ever go hungry in the richest nation in the world. Universal school breakfast and lunch policies ensure that more children have access to breakfast and lunch, they decrease families' struggle to afford groceries, reduce lunch stigma, and reduce school administrative burdens and costs.

## Caregiving:

**Universal Pre-K and Affordable Childcare (7% of income):** Universal Pre-K is not only good for early learning benefits, it's also good for the economy as a whole. In places where universal pre-k is implemented, there are higher employment rates among mothers with young children. The benefits of this early learning can be seen all the way through high school graduation rates and college enrollment. The increased earnings parents gain through having these services allow for further economic stimulus in the local community. While a Universal Pre-K program would cost about $351 billion dollars over ten years, after this time, there would be no long-term impacts on

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GDP. HHS sets the standard for affordable childcare expenses at 7% of a family's income, currently the average cost for families is around 20%. Nearly 70% of children under age six have all available parents in the workforce making high0quality childcare essential for children and for their families. The Childcare for Working Families Act would cap costs at 7% and for those families earning less than 85% of the median state income, childcare would be free. The bill also has provisions to increase pay for childcare workers and to incorporate pre-kindergarten services. 3.4 million families would pay less childcare expenses and the average family of three earning $80,000 per year would pay approximately $5,000 which is less than half of the current average cost. Childcare for Working Families Act

**Caregivers for Elderly and Disabled Individuals:** Within the current systems for healthcare and caregiver support, there are significant gaps in services and resources for individuals who provide care for their elderly and/or disabled loved ones. Respite programs vary depending on state policies, available nonprofit programs, and funding streams. One in six employees with a full-time or part-time job also provides care for a loved one. On average, these caregivers spend over $7200/year in out-of-pocket caregiving costs. Often these caregivers also neglect their own well-being to be available to care for the other person and experience high stress levels and fatigue. In extreme cases, they can burnout, end up with significant health impacts which makes them unable to continue providing care, or accept unnecessary risks to their loved one's safety and health due to a lack of access to options. Ultimately, when family caregiving arrangements fail, providing care for elderly and disabled individuals in an institutional setting costs taxpayers more and can lead to diminished quality of life. Increasing and expanding funding of the Lifespan Respite Care Program can provide states with additional funding for caregiver support and allow for direct payment for respite services, especially as people wait for Medicaid approvals or fall in the income gap between Medicaid eligibility and adequate financial resources to pay for respite care. Other policies to support family caregivers include tax credits and allowing FSAs or HSAs to be used towards caregiving services for loved ones. Robert People also support worker's rights reforms such as paid family leave requirements.

## Corporate Accountability:

**Antitrust Enforcement:** Antitrust enforcement impacts affordability because without enforcement, corporations are able to squash competition allowing them to set their own prices and dictate the market for their product or service. Currently, we see more and more monopolies in industries that are directly impacting costs and options for consumers. For example, in recent congressional hearings, congressmembers brought to light the vertical integrations of companies within the healthcare space where the provider, the pharmacy, the pharmacy benefit manager, the hospital, and the insurance in some cases are all under the same corporate umbrella working

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together to find the most dollars for their shareholders. The same is true in farming, farmers have noted that while they once were able to buy seeds and fertilizers from multiple sources, these have now consolidated into only a few options which eliminates their buying and negotiating power. American food monopolies mean that a handful of companies have about 80% of the market share with a few dominating every part of the food supply chain. These companies spend millions on lobbying lawmakers and the result is that farmers get squeezed, food industry workers are underpaid in poor working conditions, environmental impacts aren't well controlled, and consumers pay more to pad the pockets of shareholders. With antitrust enforcement, we make the corporations act ethically and encourage innovation and a free market so that the consumers and workers have the power.

**Fair Corporate Taxes:** Many profitable and large corporations pay very little for their effective tax rate. 500 corporations paid tax rates of less than 5%. Under Donald Trump's tax policies, companies have seen their rates go from an average of 22 percent to an average of 12.8%. On average, other countries collect twice the % of their GDP in corporate taxes as the United States. The benefits of these tax breaks predominantly go to wealthy shareholders and foreign investors. Meanwhile, we know these corporations use larger amounts of resources and rely on taxpayer funded infrastructure. On average, other countries have a corporate tax rate around 28%. By implementing this standard and closing loopholes exploited by companies, we can increase revenues for priorities to benefit the people and make sure that everyone is paying their fair share.

**Overturn Citizen's United:** The 2010 Supreme Court *Citizen's United v. Federal Election Commission* ruling opened the floodgates of money from corporations and wealthy donors into politics. This decision made it so that "independent" spending of PACS, corporations etc. (meaning money not given directly to a candidate's campaign) had no limits arguing that imposing limits was an abridgement of their free speech rights. Instead of PACs and SuperPACs being independent, they instead work with campaigns and many times affiliated PACs are integral to campaigns by raising unlimited funds and spending those funds on the race. Overturning Citizen's United would ultimately require a constitutional amendment, which Robert would support. In the interim, he would fight to enact strong disclosure requirements and restrictions on PACs being allowed to collaborate with campaigns. Robert would vote for and cosponsor The Campaign Transparency Act and the Stop the Super PAC-Candidate Coordination Act, both sponsored by Representative Delia Ramirez.

**Consumer Financial Protection Bureau:** Since the beginning of Trump's second term, he and his administration have been attacking and trying to dismantle the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. This agency was created specifically to protect consumers from unfair, abusive, and deceptive practices. Since it's inception in 2011, it has returned over 21 billion dollars to

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consumers including through judgments against Wells Fargo, Bank of America, and Navient. While the agency still stands, the administration has withdrawn from enforcement actions, withdrawn guidance documents, overturned rules, withdrawn settlements, and handed over enforcement to the DOJ for anything else. These actions have cost consumers up to $19 billion and there is no way to measure the costs to consumers through current abusive, deceptive, or unfair business practices that are not being investigated or subjected to enforcement action. Robert People believes in the mission of the CFPB and the clear evidence of how it has benefitted the people. He would fight to preserve this agency and would support efforts to make it functional and beneficial for the American public once again. Robert would also vote for click-to-cancel legislation requiring that subscriptions are just as easy to unsubscribe from as they were to subscribe for in the first place. Representative Laurel Lee voted against this bill.

## Taxes and Spending:

**Tax the Billionaires:** Billionaires in the US often pay a lower tax rate than nurses or teachers. While conservatives have picked up the talking point that billionaires pay a significant % of the total taxes paid in this country, that argument ignores the reality of how that amount of money is a much smaller percentage of their income or wealth than what the average American is responsible to pay. 60% of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck and wealth inequality is growing. The wealthiest 400 billionaire families in the US paid an average of an 8.2% tax rate in 2021 while the average American was paying 13%. The IRS should raise tax rates for billionaires and equalize capital gains taxes with taxes on labor income. They should also implement a wealth tax and close tax loopholes used by the wealthy to decrease their tax liabilities. Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Ro Khanna have introduced the Make Billionaires Pay their Fair Share Act. Robert People would support and vote for this legislation establishing a 5% annual wealth tax on billionaires which would raise 4.4 trillion in the next decade and fund minimum teacher salaries, childcare subsidies, expanded Medicare coverage and more services and resources to benefit the people.

**End the Tariff War:** Since the start of Trump's second term and his obsession with using tariffs, Americans are estimated to have paid $1745 more per household in 2025. In 2026, that total is expected to reach $2500. Congress's refusal to rein in Trump's unpredictable tariff policies is resulting in real economic impacts to American households and damaging U.S. relationships and trade agreements around the world. The impact of these tariffs on farmers is crippling resulting in a surge in farm bankruptcies and consolidations. We need to provide stability to the market, preserve trade channels for selling our goods and products, and we need to stop increasing costs for Americans when these tariffs get passed on to consumers. Robert People would vote to take back the power of the purse and stop the tariff chaos caused by President Trump.

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**Cut War and DOD Spending:** The Department of Defense has had its budget increased significantly in President Trump's second term. In 2024, the budget was 841.4 billion dollars and for 2025, it was 833 billion. For 2026, the first year under Trump's budget it increased to around 1.1 trillion and for 2027, Trump has requested 1.5 trillion. The proposed budget by Congress is around 1.15 trillion with a reconciliation planned to provide 350 billion more. The Department of Defense has not passed an audit for eight consecutive years and the administration under Donald Trump and with Laurel Lee's vote of approval plan to give the department billions of dollars more. As a 21-year Army veteran, Robert People saw firsthand some of the waste, fraud, and abuse that exists in the Department of Defense yet it is always exempted from efforts to curb and prioritize spending.

In September of 2025, we saw the impact of this fiscal irresponsibility as Pentagon spending was rampant in an effort to spend 93 billion dollars before they lost it. This included a record 6.6 billion spent on purchases from foreign governments and foreign owned businesses. Meanwhile, 26% of service members experience food insecurity and around 15% rely on food assistance or food stamps. Under Trump, the DOD has spent 1.5 million per day on the deployment of the National Guard to D.C. where their presence has only decreased petty crimes, is spending about $2 billion dollars per day in Iran, and has given out multiple no-bid contracts to companies associated with friends and family of administration officials. Yet, service members at the Kuwaiti air base who were injured in an attack by Iran that killed several of our troops reported they were not provided with additional medical staff and supplies nor were they appropriately protected from aerial attacks despite advance notice of the potential. Robert People will stand up for our service members and their prioritization within the DOD. He will fight against wasting taxpayer funds on forever wars, funding vanity projects, missions with no measurable objectives, and funding/equipping foreign militaries including the Israeli Defense Forces.

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