Faith In The Budget

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Synopsis
Rep. Frank Lucas was chair of the House Committee on Agriculture, the committee charged with overseeing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, commonly known as food stamps. On March 20, 2012 Rep. Paul Ryan, chairman of the U.S. House of Representative Committee on the Budget introduced a budget proposal entitled “The Path to Prosperity.” This budget proposed large cuts to SNAP. Rep. Ryan claimed his budget was based on his Catholic faith. In response to Rep. Ryan’s claims, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops sent a letter to Rep. Lucas, opposing Ryan’s budget, and asking him to oppose the cuts to SNAP because of Catholic social teaching. Rep Lucas had to decide whether to support the cuts to the SNAP Program or not.

Learning Outcome
The objectives of this case are:
1. Evaluate the government’s role in economic affairs according to Milton Friedman.
2. Evaluate the role religious beliefs should play in the work of elected officials.
3. Evaluate the application of religious beliefs in the formation of economic policy.
4. Analyze the economic implications of a specific policy recommendation from a federal budget proposal.

Application
This case is intended for use in undergraduate or graduate courses on economics, political science, leadership, business ethics, or public policy to analyze macroeconomic and political policy issues.

Key Words
Debt, Deficit, Faith, Government Budget, SNAP

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