MADISON – The reaction to Speaker Paul Ryan's empty and self-serving speech this week was clearly not what he was hoping for. While the Speaker expressed hollow statements on the state of American politics, the public knows far better than to trust the words of someone who has pushed draconian budgets, contributed to years of gridlock and dysfunction in Congress, and still refuses to stand up to the extreme elements of the Republican Party.

It is easy for Speaker Ryan to stand at a mic and speak in platitudes, but he can't hide from his record of cutting funding for crucial service programs, voting against raising the minimum wage, voting to ban same-sex marriage, attacking women's rights, and attempting to repeal health care for millions of Americans.

Just see what some of the national news outlets had to say:

Mother Jones: Paul Ryan Says He Regrets Calling the Poor "Takers." That Isn't Enough.
"The obvious pushback is that while Ryan may have stopped talking about "makers and takers," his policies are exactly the same as they've always been. After all that time spent listening, he changed his rhetoric but apparently none of his substantive views."

Think Progress: Paul Ryan Apologizes For Calling The Poor 'Takers'
"While offering a mild denunciation of the anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, anti-woman, and pro-white supremacist rhetoric in the 2016 race, Ryan failed to acknowledge that the Republican Party has for years pushed bills in Congress that advance similar views and helped create a space for the current election tenor."

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Paul Ryan needs to stop playing Mr. Nice Guy with Donald Trump
"But here's another idea that matters: Donald Trump doesn't care about your ideas. He cares about what the barbarians always care about: power."

Vox: Paul Ryan's bizarre speech was a de facto endorsement of Donald Trump
"Given the chance to reflect on the state of national politics, Ryan does not sense an alarming rise in overt racism or anti-Muslim prejudice. Ryan does not feel that anti-immigration sentiment has gone too far. Ryan doesn't even express alarm at the backlash against international trade. Ryan isn't worried about protestors getting beaten up at rallies, and Ryan isn't worried that a leading presidential candidate lies constantly. Ryan just thinks people should be nicer, in

general, and that Republicans should say nice things about poor people. All in all, an excellent day for Trump."

Washington Post: Dear reporters: Don't forget Paul Ryan said he would support Donald Trump as the GOP nominee
"Ryan (R-Wis.) is quite obviously not a fan of the way Trump campaigns. But here's the thing: He has said repeatedly that he will back the billionaire real estate magnate should Trump win the GOP nomination. This is a major caveat that should temper any praise of Ryan's supposed fortitude -- and any argument that his words carry weight."

Washington Post: Paul Ryan's cowardly neutrality on Trump
"There is, in general, plenty of bad behavior on all sides. But the current crisis is very specific: A xenophobe who makes scapegoats of racial and religious minorities is threatening to take over the Republican Party and to throw the country into turmoil — and Ryan isn't denouncing him, or even saying he won't support Trump."

US News: Paul Ryan and He Who Must Not Be Named
"Ryan didn't just ignore the elephant in the room; he ignored that a rampaging elephant is tearing the room down around him. In fact, Ryan's speech displayed just how divorced his words are from the current Republican zeitgeist. The policy he pointed to as indicative of the way the parties can come together – tax reform – is telling. Ryan, as he has always done since arriving in Washington, is hawking a tax plan that will deliver most of its benefits to the richest Americans."