
By Abandoning Bipartisan Agreement, House Republicans Force Low-Income Victims of SNAP Benefit Theft to Pay \$1.5 Billion Price

Statement of Ty Jones Cox, CBPP Vice President for Food Assistance, on the removal of benefit theft protections from year-end government funding legislation:

The year-end legislation to temporarily extend government funding that was enacted last weekend fails to extend protections for victims of SNAP benefit theft, abandoning a bipartisan agreement reached earlier last week to continue these vital protections for the next four years. Unconscionably, Republican leadership insisted on letting benefit replacement for low-income households victimized by SNAP benefit theft expire at the same time the law extends other farm bill provisions through September 2025 and provides an additional \$10 billion for economic aid for farmers.

As a result, hundreds of thousands of low-income families whose SNAP benefits are stolen will no longer have those benefits restored. This will leave families with children, older adults, people with disabilities, and other low-income people across the country without the help they need to put food on the table. Ending the process to replace stolen benefits for victims will also make it more difficult to track and stop the individuals behind these crimes, because fewer people will report the crime. Leaving out these critical protections will cut SNAP benefits by roughly \$1.5 billion over the next decade, based on Congressional Budget Office estimates. Congress must fix this and reinstate these protections at the next possible opportunity.

This egregious decision comes as food insecurity has been rising over the last two years, coinciding with higher food prices and the end of temporary pandemic-related relief measures. But despite more people struggling to afford groceries, some Republican lawmakers and the incoming Trump Administration are reportedly eyeing SNAP, our nation's most important anti-hunger program, for deep cuts next year. In a country where 47 million people live in food-insecure households, Congress must prioritize protecting and strengthening SNAP, including by reinstating protections for victims of benefit theft.

Note: After CBPP released this statement, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) issued a cost estimate of the law with an estimate of the SNAP cut. CBO estimates a \$1.28 billion cut in SNAP benefits over the 2025 to 2034 period from the failure to extend the SNAP benefit theft replacement. The amount is lower than the \$1.5 billion CBO included in its baseline because 2024 is completed, so the cut will begin in 2025.

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