

Proposed Farm Bill Ignores Unfolding Food Assistance Crisis

Statement of Ty Jones Cox, Vice President for Food Assistance, on the House Agriculture Committee Chair's proposed farm bill

The farm bill proposal released today by House Agriculture Committee Chair Glenn "GT" Thompson fails to address the crisis created by cuts to SNAP enacted last summer that will take away needed food assistance from millions of low-income families who are already struggling to afford the rising cost of food.

No one should go hungry in a nation with as many resources as ours, and the farm bill presents a critical opportunity for Congress to reduce food insecurity by restoring and strengthening SNAP, our nation's most important and effective anti-hunger program. Last year, 47.9 million people lived in households that struggled with food insecurity, and millions will see their food assistance cut substantially or terminated altogether as the full brunt of the Republican megabill's SNAP cuts take effect. The House Agriculture Committee's farm bill proposal ignores the urgent need to address this harm.

Families across the country are already feeling the impacts of the nearly \$187 billion in SNAP cuts enacted through the Republican megabill last July – a roughly 20 percent cut, representing the deepest cut in history. While the Department of Agriculture (USDA) has published data only through October, several states with more recent data are showing alarming declines in the number of low-income people receiving basic food assistance. In Arizona, where [hundreds of thousands fewer people](#) received SNAP in December than in July, one official called the state's challenges with delays and backlogs as it instituted new paperwork requirements while cutting staff "[a direct consequence](#)" of the megabill.

Hundreds of thousands of people haven't dropped off SNAP in the span of a few months because they no longer needed help affording food – economic conditions haven't improved and groceries haven't gotten more affordable. Instead, they're being cut off by the megabill's harsh eligibility restrictions, additional paperwork and red tape, and states' moves to restrict access for eligible low-income households due to pressure from an impending requirement that states pay a share of SNAP benefits for the first time. This farm bill proposal does nothing to address these factors, leaving the people being cut off SNAP without the support they need to put food on the table.

Even deeper SNAP cuts are on the horizon as states face the ticking time bomb of the enormous unfunded mandate. States that can't make up for these massive federal cuts by raising taxes or cutting

other vital services will have to further cut SNAP – or possibly even withdraw from the program altogether, terminating food assistance for all low-income people in the state, including children, seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and adults.

The risks of greater costs to states have risen since the megabill’s enactment due to the rushed implementation of the law’s other SNAP cuts, delayed implementation guidance from USDA, and the disruption caused by the 43-day government shutdown, further jeopardizing the basic food assistance that low-income families need. This chaos and confusion will cause states to make more mistakes, which could result in deeper cuts in federal SNAP funding. In light of these circumstances, a bipartisan coalition of state and local officials recently [called on Congress to give all states more time before](#) imposing new SNAP costs on states and localities, not just the handful of states that received the delay in last summer’s bill. This farm bill proposal fails to heed that call, or to address the harm families across the U.S. are already experiencing as they try to put enough food on the table.

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