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House Republican Reconciliation Bill Takes Away Health Coverage, Food Assistance, Tax Credits From Millions of Immigrants and Their Families

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The House Republican reconciliation bill would impose massive cuts in food assistance, health care coverage, and other supports for people with low incomes[1] and singles out immigrants with lawful status and their families for particularly cruel restrictions on assistance. These measures would partially pay for the bill's trillions of dollars in tax cuts heavily weighted to the wealthy,[2] as well as its $50 billion for border wall construction and around $150 billion for a large detention and deportation apparatus[3] that threatens family separation and unjust treatment of immigrants and others who get swept up by the deportation dragnet.

Although congressional Republicans have falsely claimed that the cuts targeting immigrants are aimed at people without a documented immigration status, the reality is that *people who lack documentation already do not qualify for these benefits.* Instead, the cuts would primarily impact immigrants who lawfully live and work in the U.S. and U.S. citizen children in immigrant families.

At the same time, the Trump Administration is taking steps to terminate lawful status for hundreds of thousands of people granted humanitarian parole, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, and others who have sought refuge in this country. The combination of these changes and the new restrictive policies would leave people more hungry, less healthy, less able to buy food for their children (who are often U.S. citizens), and less able to contribute to their communities.

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[1] CBPP, "By the Numbers: House Bill Takes Health Coverage Away From Millions of People and Raises Families' Health Care Costs," updated May 23, 2025, https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/by-the-numbers-house-bill-takes-health-coverage-away-from-millions-of-people-and; CBPP, "By the Numbers: House Republican Reconciliation Bill Takes Food Assistance Away From Millions of People," May 23, 2025, https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/by-the-numbers-house-republican-reconciliation-bill-takes-food-assistance.

[2] Sharon Parrott, "House Republicans' Shockingly Harmful Agenda Is Now Crystal Clear — the Country Deserves Better," CBPP, May 16, 2025, https://www.cbpp.org/press/statements/house-republicans-shockingly-harmful-agenda-is-now-crystal-clear-the-country.

[3] American Immigration Council, "Rapid Response Analysis: U.S. House of Representatives 2025 'Reconciliation' Spending Provisions Related to Immigration and the Border," May 14, 2025, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/rapid-analysis-2025-recon.

House Bill Targets People Granted Humanitarian Protections

In 1996, Congress enacted a set of very restrictive rules that took away food assistance and health coverage from many people lawfully living in the U.S. Among those whose eligibility the legislation protected, however, were people whose immigration status was granted out of humanitarian concern for their (and their family's) well-being and safety.

This group includes refugees who are fleeing persecution and have been vetted and adjudicated as needing protection before they come to this country. It also includes people who have been granted asylum after proving, while in the U.S., that they would face persecution in their home country. And it includes people who have been granted humanitarian parole (such as Afghans who assisted the U.S. during wartime and would be harmed if they remained in Afghanistan), certain victims of sex or labor trafficking who help law enforcement bring the perpetrators to justice, and certain victims of domestic violence.

The House Republican reconciliation bill pointedly seeks to turn the nation against people who have received humanitarian protection — many of whom have no resources — and deny them the often temporary help they need to get established in the U.S. and provide for their families.

Taking Away Health Coverage

The House reconciliation bill, passed in the early hours of the morning of May 22 by a one-vote Republican majority, would take away health coverage that millions of immigrants who are living and working lawfully in the U.S. now receive through various sources, including the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplaces, Medicare, and Medicaid.

ACA Marketplaces

The House bill would bar many lawfully present immigrants from qualifying for premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions that help people afford health insurance in the ACA marketplaces. It would also bar the same group from qualifying for health coverage from the Basic Health Program, which Oregon and Minnesota use to provide coverage to people with low incomes rather than through the ACA marketplace. (People without a documented immigration status are already barred from purchasing coverage in the ACA marketplaces, contrary to House Republicans' claims.)[4]

Under current law, only individuals who are lawfully present in the U.S. may receive financial assistance to buy marketplace coverage.[5] But the bill radically narrows which categories of immigrants would qualify, taking away assistance from numerous groups of immigrants who all have lawful immigration statuses: people granted asylum; refugees; special immigrant juveniles who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent; TPS holders; those granted humanitarian parole (based on a determination that their urgent humanitarian needs cannot be met in their home

[4] See floor statement by Rep. Brad Schneider, House Ways and Means Committee markup of the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal year 2025, H. Con. Res. 14, May 13, 2025.

[5] National Immigration Law Center, "'Lawfully Present' Individuals Eligible Under the Affordable Care Act," updated May 2024, https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Lawfully-Present-Individuals-Eligible-Under-ACA-2024.pdf.

countries); and certain victims of domestic violence, labor or sex trafficking, and other serious crimes, among others.

The only groups eligible for assistance to afford marketplace coverage would be U.S. citizens, people with lawful permanent resident status (LPRs, also known as green card holders), certain Cubans paroled into the U.S. under a specific family reunification program, and people from the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau who live and work in the United States under Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

The bill would also take away premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions that help low-income people who are lawfully present but ineligible for Medicaid due to their immigration status buy marketplace coverage. The ACA included a provision that allows people in these groups to qualify for premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions even if their incomes are below the poverty line.

Medicare

The bill would also take Medicare away from people with lawful immigration status. Medicare is an earned benefit, meaning that only people who themselves (or whose spouses) have worked in the U.S. for at least 40 quarters — ten years — qualify. Currently, lawfully present immigrants who meet this work history test as well as other program requirements are eligible for Medicare. The House bill would restrict access so that only citizens, LPRs, certain Cuban parolees, and people residing in the U.S. from COFA nations would be eligible. As a result, people with TPS as well as refugees, those granted asylum, and certain survivors of domestic violence, labor or sex trafficking, and other serious crimes, among others, would be stripped of Medicare eligibility.

While many refugees and asylees ultimately convert to LPR status, some are unable to due to health or other limitations. People with TPS, a long-standing form of immigration relief that administrations from both parties have used to enable people in humanitarian need to live and work lawfully in the U.S., generally have no pathway to LPR status. They may therefore pay Medicare payroll taxes for years into a system they will never benefit from, subsidizing U.S. citizens and LPRs while being left with no health coverage when they need it.

Penalizing States That Provide Health Coverage to Certain Immigrants

The House bill would levy severe penalties on states that have adopted the Medicaid expansion under the ACA if the state provides certain categories of immigrants (including many who have lawful immigration statuses) with access to comprehensive health coverage, *regardless* of the source of funding for that coverage.

Medicaid has strict, long-standing eligibility requirements that prohibit anyone who is undocumented from enrolling and also bar many people with lawful immigration statuses from accessing coverage. A 1996 law created the "qualified alien" immigration standard to be used in determining eligibility for Medicaid; a narrow list of immigration statuses are defined as "qualified," and many people with "qualified alien" status are only eligible for Medicaid after they have had that status for five years.

The House bill would impose a penalty on states that provide comprehensive health coverage to people who are not U.S. citizens or "qualified aliens," even if the state solely uses its *own* funds or private funds to provide this coverage or the state provides coverage permitted under the federal Medicaid or CHIP programs.

States that operate programs with the following criteria would trigger a sizable penalty:

- Programs funded solely by state funds in 16 states and the District of Columbia that provide comprehensive health coverage to people who are not citizens and do not have a "qualified alien" status.
- Any comprehensive coverage (including Medicaid) to people granted humanitarian parole (and that status is granted for at least one year). This group would otherwise meet the federal immigration-related eligibility requirement for federally funded Medicaid after a five-year waiting period, but for the purposes of this penalty, the House bill excludes them from the "qualified alien" standard, meaning that states would trigger the penalty if they continued to cover this group in Medicaid.
- Potentially, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage to children and pregnant adults who are "lawfully residing" in the U.S., a more generous eligibility standard than the strict "qualified alien" standard. The House-passed bill exempts states that have taken up this "lawfully residing" option (created by 2009 legislation) to provide coverage through Medicaid, but the bill language is unclear as to whether the penalty could still be levied on states that have taken up this option under CHIP.

Any state that provides comprehensive coverage to individuals described above would be penalized with a cut in its federal matching rate for covering the ACA Medicaid expansion population — an entirely different group of people — from 90 to 80 percent. This would double its state cost for the Medicaid expansion group. (See Table 1.) (For states that have not expanded Medicaid but that cover one or more of these groups, no penalty would apply.)

This policy is a direct affront to state sovereignty, placing enormous pressure on states to reduce or terminate coverage programs that their lawmakers have adopted and that they have a legal right to provide or face devastating cuts to Medicaid expansion funding. It goes beyond coercion by imposing a direct, virtually unavoidable penalty on some states. New York, for example, is required under its state constitution to provide health coverage to certain individuals who do not have a "qualified alien" status.[6]

The bill would also result in unequal treatment among the states. For example, states that have not taken up the Medicaid expansion, including Florida and Georgia, would not be penalized for taking up the CHIP "lawfully residing" coverage option, while states that have expanded Medicaid, such as Pennsylvania and Virginia, would lose significant federal funding for continuing their CHIP "lawfully residing" options.

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[6] New York Health Access, "Medicaid for Immigrants who are Not Permanent Residents (Do Not have 'Green Cards') — PRUCOL and Temporary Non-Immigrant Eligibility," updated March 12, 2025, http://health.wnylc.com/health/entry/33/#state%20directives.

TABLE 1

Increase in State Portion of Medicaid Expansion Spending to Maintain Current State Policies, FY 2028-2034

	Increase in state portion of Medicaid expansion spending ($ millions)	Increase relative to baseline Medicaid expansion spending (%)
Total	**145,175**	**100**
Alaska	417	100
Arizona*	4,915	100
Arkansas*	2,432	100
California	27,450	100
Colorado	2,291	100
Connecticut	2,380	100
Delaware	636	100
District of Columbia	603	100
Hawai‘i	781	100
Idaho**	721	100
Illinois*	5,108	100
Indiana*	3,411	100
Iowa**	1,342	100
Kentucky	4,103	100
Louisiana	4,307	100
Maine	630	100
Maryland	3,732	100
Massachusetts	3,034	100
Michigan	6,136	100
Minnesota	2,532	100
Missouri	2,695	100
Montana*	986	100
Nebraska	711	100
Nevada	1,759	100
New Hampshire*	350	100
New Jersey	4,520	100
New Mexico**	2,017	100
New York	15,525	100
North Carolina*	6,039	100
North Dakota	346	100
Ohio	5,504	100
Oklahoma	1,959	100
Oregon	4,090	100
Pennsylvania	6,451	100
Rhode Island	607	100

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	Increase in state portion of Medicaid expansion spending ($ millions)	Increase relative to baseline Medicaid expansion spending (%)
South Dakota	281	100
Utah*	924	100
Vermont	313	100
Virginia*	5,793	100
Washington	6,066	100
West Virginia	1,279	100

*States have "trigger" laws that would immediately terminate the ACA expansion if the expansion federal match rate decreased. These laws would force the state legislatures to decide whether to continue their current immigrant coverage programs that closely resemble Medicaid.

** States have "trigger" laws that would require a review process that would potentially result in Medicaid expansion being reduced or eliminated.

*** States expanded through constitutional amendments. Legislators have no easy way to rescind expansion.

Source: CBPP estimates based on Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' MBES data, Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission analysis of T-MSIS data, state administrative enrollment data, and June 2024 Congressional Budget Office baseline projections.

Taking Away the Child Tax Credit

The bill would strip 4.5 million children who are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents of eligibility for the Child Tax Credit if even one of their parents files taxes without a Social Security number (SSN), according to estimates by the Center for Migration Studies.[7] (In married-couple families, both parents would need an SSN; in single-parent families, just the parent claiming the child would need an SSN.) While these children would be eligible for the $500 Credit for Other Dependents, which the 2017 tax law created for certain dependents who don't qualify for the Child Tax Credit, families with low incomes who do not have tax liability don't receive it. Research shows that children in low-income families that receive income supports like the Child Tax Credit have better health and educational outcomes during childhood, as well as higher earnings as adults.[8]

Around 1 million children are already denied eligibility for the Child Tax Credit under current law because they do not have an SSN. The bill would go much further by denying the credit to children who are U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents who live in immigrant families.[9] Note that the

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[7] Matthew Lisiecki *et al.,* "New Estimates of the Number of United States Citizen and Legal Permanent Resident Children Who May Lose Eligibility for the Child Tax Credit," Center for Migration Studies, April 24, 2025, https://cmsny.org/publications/number-of-children-who-may-lose-eligibility-for-the-child-tax-credit/.

[8] Marianne E. Page, "New Advances on an Old Question: Does Money Matter for Children's Outcomes?" Journal of Economic Literature, Vol. 62, No. 3, September 2024, https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jel.20231553&page=301.

[9] Marco Guzman, "Inclusive Child Tax Credit Reform Would Restore Benefit to 1 Million Young 'Dreamers,'" Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, April 27, 2021, https://itep.org/inclusive-child-tax-credit-reform-would-restore-benefit-to-1-million-young-dreamers/.

bill even takes the credit away from a child who has one U.S. citizen parent, even if the other parent is lawfully residing in the U.S. but does not have an SSN. (This would happen if the second parent had a student visa, for example.)

The bill also contains a number of other anti-immigrant tax provisions. It imposes a 3.5 percent tax on remittances sent abroad by immigrants, while exempting citizens who undertake the same activity; it requires an SSN to claim new tax incentives in the bill, such as the "no tax on tips"; and it denies the American Opportunity Tax Credit and Lifelong Learning Credit to people without an SSN. These unprecedented restrictions on tax code benefits based solely on a person's immigration status create a higher effective tax rate for people who are following the law and filing their taxes using an ITIN.

Taking Away Food Assistance

The bill would take away food assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) from refugees, people approved for asylum, and other people living in the U.S. lawfully, including certain immigrants who are victims of domestic violence (as well as their children and/or parents) and certain survivors of labor or sex trafficking.

People without a documented immigration status have never been eligible for SNAP, and many people with lawful immigration statuses are already ineligible for SNAP due to program restrictions enacted in 1996. The House bill would go much further, leaving only citizens, lawful permanent residents (after a five-year waiting period for adults), certain Cuban parolees, and COFA migrants eligible for SNAP. All other "qualified aliens" would be denied access to SNAP.

The people who would be cut off SNAP by this provision are primarily refugees and individuals who have been granted asylum, as well as people granted withholding of removal[10] — people who have fled their homes seeking safety from persecution and violence and have been heavily vetted by the U.S. government to be granted this humanitarian relief. Congress has previously exempted these immigrants from the five-year bar. In 2023, according to program data, 434,000 refugees, people granted asylum, and individuals granted withholding of removal received SNAP. While these immigrants represented only 1.1 percent of SNAP participants nationwide, they were a much greater share in a small handful of states. For example, in Florida and Nebraska they represented roughly 5 to 6 percent of SNAP participants. (Table 2 shows how many refugees and people granted asylum or withholding of removal participated in SNAP in each state in fiscal year 2023.) Roughly 105,000 of these individuals were children and 58,000 were older adults (60 or older) or adults (18-59) who had a disability.[11] (See Table 3.)

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[10] The Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture uses the term "stay of deportation" in its "Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2023" report to refer to individuals granted withholding of removal, a form of relief for individuals ineligible for asylum, but who have demonstrated that they cannot be returned to their home countries due to the high likelihood that they would face persecution. For the purposes of this paper, we will use the term "withholding of removal" in lieu of "stay of deportation."

[11] Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Households, FY 2023," Table A-23, April 2025, https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-FY23-Characteristics-Report.pdf. The number of children, elderly and disabled adults, and the share of states' SNAP caseload is based on CBPP analysis of 2023 SNAP quality control public use data.

TABLE 2

Hundreds of Thousands of Refugees, People Granted Asylum, and People Granted Withholding of Removal Would Lose Food Assistance Under House Republican Bill

Fiscal year 2023 participation

State	SNAP Participants Admitted as a Refugee, Granted Asylum, or Granted Withholding of Removal
Total	**434,000**
Alabama	NA
Alaska	Less than 1,000
Arizona	6,000
Arkansas	1,000
California	30,000
Colorado	4,000
Connecticut	5,000
Delaware	Less than 1,000
District of Columbia	Less than 1,000
Florida	180,000
Georgia	3,000
Guam	NA
Hawai‘i	Less than 1,000
Idaho	1,000
Illinois	11,000
Indiana	7,000
Iowa	4,000
Kansas	3,000
Kentucky	2,000
Louisiana	NA
Maine	1,000
Maryland	Less than 1,000
Massachusetts	11,000
Michigan	15,000
Minnesota	4,000
Mississippi	NA
Missouri	5,000
Montana	Less than 1,000
Nebraska	7,000
Nevada	5,000
New Hampshire	1,000
New Jersey	1,000
New Mexico	2,000

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Fiscal year 2023 participation

State	SNAP Participants Admitted as a Refugee, Granted Asylum, or Granted Withholding of Removal
New York	25,000
North Carolina	8,000
North Dakota	1,000
Ohio	7,000
Oklahoma	1,000
Oregon	2,000
Pennsylvania	16,000
Rhode Island	1,000
South Carolina	Less than 1,000
South Dakota	1,000
Tennessee	Less than 1,000
Texas	25,000
Utah	3,000
Vermont	Less than 1,000
Virgin Islands	Less than 1,000
Virginia	14,000
Washington	15,000
West Virginia	NA
Wisconsin	3,000
Wyoming	NA

Note: "NA" refers to states who have no sample data. Figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000 and do not sum to total due to rounding. Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are not included in this table because they receive a nutrition assistance block grant in lieu of participation in SNAP.

Source: CBPP analysis of SNAP quality control data for fiscal year 2023

Additionally, we estimate that more than 209,000 other eligible immigrants who were not LPRs — nearly all of whom would lose eligibility for SNAP — participated in the program in 2023.[12] Of these other eligible immigrants, 64,000 were children and 44,000 were adults 60 or older or who had a disability. (See Table 3.) These other immigrants include certain survivors of domestic violence (as well as their children and parents) and certain survivors of labor or sex trafficking. Many people fleeing war in Afghanistan and Ukraine would also lose eligibility for SNAP, as would other people granted humanitarian parole (if they met a five-year waiting period, as applicable). Additionally, some Afghans and Iraqis who assisted the U.S. during wartime, at grave risk to their own safety, would be excluded.

[12] CBPP analysis of 2023 SNAP quality control data for fiscal year 2023.

In addition to the direct harm to immigrants who would lose SNAP eligibility, this provision would also impact U.S. citizen children who live with them. While these U.S. citizen children would generally remain eligible for SNAP, excluding their immigrant household members means they would receive a dramatically reduced benefit level that would not allow the family to afford the groceries they need. In total, we estimate about 98,000 U.S. citizen children lived in SNAP households with immigrants who would lose SNAP eligibility in fiscal year 2023. (See Table 3.)

TABLE 3

SNAP Eligibility Restrictions for Immigrants Lawfully in the U.S. Would Take Food Away from Children, Seniors, and People with Disabilities

Fiscal year 2023 participation

	Children	Adults Who Are Elderly or Disabled	U.S. Citizen Children in Household
SNAP Participants Admitted as a Refugee, Granted Asylum, or Granted Withholding of Removal	105,000	58,000	36,000
SNAP Participants with Other Eligible Immigration Statuses, Excluding Legal Permanent Residents	64,000	44,000	62,000
Total	169,000	101,000	98,000

Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000 and may not sum to totals due to rounding. "Elderly" refers to adults aged 60 or older.

Source: CBPP analysis of SNAP quality control data for fiscal year 2023

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates the House bill provision would take food assistance away from between 120,000 and 250,000 people over the next ten years.[13] Roughly 50,000 of the immigrants losing their eligibility for SNAP would be children, we estimate, putting them at greater risk of food insecurity and significant harm to their long-term health and cognitive development.

Under CBO's projections, this provision would result in deeper cuts in the near term, with the largest cut occurring in 2027.[14] This is likely because many, though not all, people in these statuses have a path to apply for LPR status after a certain period of time. Doing so would restore their

[13] Phillip L. Swagel, Letter to Sens. Klobuchar and Craig Re: Potential Effects on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program of Reconciliation Recommendations Pursuant to H. Con. Res. 14, as Ordered Reported by the House Committee on Agriculture on May 12, 2025, Congressional Budget Office, May 22, 2025. https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2025-05/Klobuchar-Craig-Letter-SNAP_5-22-25.pdf.

[14] CBO, "Estimated Budgetary Effects of a Bill to Provide for Reconciliation Pursuant to Title II of H. Con. Res. 14, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, as ordered reported by the House Committee on the Budget on May 18, 2025," May 20, 2025, https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61420.

eligibility for food assistance as long as they continue to meet the SNAP's other eligibility criteria. However, adjustment of status is often a lengthy process, and earlier this year, the Trump Administration suspended processing of LPR applications from refugees and people granted asylum. While the Department of Homeland Security has described this as a "temporary pause," this could leave many of the individuals losing SNAP eligibility without a timely pathway to a status that would restore their eligibility for food assistance.[15]

Additionally, CBO may be assuming that fewer immigrants in these categories will be admitted in the coming years. The U.S. is currently admitting fewer refugees and making it more difficult for people to apply for asylum, reducing the number of people who would otherwise have been eligible for SNAP.

[15] Camilo Montoya-Galvez, "Trump administration pauses some green card applications as part of aggressive vetting effort," CBS News, March 25, 2025, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/green-card-applications-trump-administration/.