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Research Note: Senate Agriculture Committee's Revised Proposal Risks Deep Cuts to Food Assistance, Some States Ending SNAP Entirely

By Katie Bergh

Like the original version released a few weeks ago, the revised reconciliation proposal released by Senate Agriculture Committee Chair John Boozman would radically alter the structure of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by requiring most states to pay a portion of food benefit costs for the first time.[1] The updated version includes only minor changes to this provision to rectify the Senate parliamentarian's ruling that the original version did not meet the criteria allowing legislation to pass the Senate by a simple majority vote. These changes do not undo the harm that this provision would cause for low-income households and state budgets.

States, which must balance their budgets every year, would struggle to absorb these substantial new costs.[2] If a state cannot fully pay its required share, it would have two main options: significantly reduce the number of people receiving food assistance to the point where the state can afford its required share of benefits for the remaining households, or *terminate the state's SNAP program entirely*.

Cost-Shift Proposal Would Cause Deep Harm

- **Despite revisions, states would still face large and highly volatile costs.** Under the Senate Agriculture Committee plan, the amount a state would owe would depend on its combined payment error rate, which measures the over- and under-payments its SNAP program makes in a year. Most of the errors are unintentional mistakes by state agencies or families, and most reflect the wrong amount of benefits going to households with low incomes and that are eligible for benefits.[3]

[1] Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, "Chairman Boozman Releases Updated Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Budget Reconciliation Text," June 25, 2025, https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/newsroom/rep/press/release/chairman-boozman-releases-updated-agriculture-nutrition-and-forestry-budget-reconciliation-text.

[2] Wesley Tharpe, Katie Bergh, and Allison Orris, "House Republican Reconciliation Bill Would Force States to Cut Food Assistance, Health Care, and Other Vital Services," CBPP, June 3, 2025, https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/house-republican-reconciliation-bill-would-force-states-to-cut-food.

[3] Dottie Rosenbaum and Katie Bergh, "SNAP Includes Extensive Payment Accuracy System," CBPP, updated June 21, 2024, https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-includes-extensive-payment-accuracy-system.

Error rates fluctuate, sometimes significantly, from year to year. There is also a substantial lag between the end of a fiscal year and when error rates for that year are finalized. Under SNAP law, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) publishes error rates for a particular fiscal year by the end of the subsequent June. USDA published error rates for fiscal year 2024 on June 30, 2025.[4]

The year-to-year volatility means a cost-shift linked to a state's error rate is inherently unpredictable and difficult for states to plan and budget for. The revised Senate plan seeks to mitigate this by giving states 15 months, rather than the three months provided in the original version, to budget for their required share of SNAP food benefit costs before the start of the applicable federal fiscal year.

Under the revised plan, states could choose whether to use their fiscal year 2025 or 2026 error rate to determine the cost-shift for fiscal year 2028, the first year the requirement would be in effect. Thus, states would know the maximum cost-shift percentage they would be required to pay for 2028 when 2025 error rates are published in June 2026. In subsequent years, the cost-shift for a particular fiscal year would be based on the state's error rate from three years prior. For example, the cost-shift for fiscal year 2030 would be based on fiscal year 2027 error rates, which would be published in June 2028.

However, this revision does not address the unpredictability of how much a state may be required to pay year to year, especially for the 20 states that budget on a biennial basis. The tiered cost-shift penalty structure in the Senate plan, which requires states to pay 5, 10, or 15 percent of food benefits if their error rate exceeds certain thresholds, means even a small increase in a state's error rate could require the state to pay tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars more than in the prior year. (See Table 2.) If this cost-shift plan were currently in effect, roughly one-quarter of states would owe a higher share of SNAP food benefit costs based on their fiscal year 2024 error rate than they would have based on their fiscal year 2023 error rate, even though SNAP's national error rate fell.

This volatility would make it difficult for states to plan for the cost-shift in their budgets over the long term and could increase the likelihood that a state would be unable to pay the full amount.

- **Nearly all states would likely face a cost share in some or all years over the next decade.** States with error rates of 6 percent or above would have to pay between 5 and 15 percent of the cost of SNAP benefits. All but one state has had an error rate of 6 percent or higher between 2003 and 2024 (the most recent year available). Table 1 below shows each state's 2024 error rate as well as its lowest and highest error rate since 2003.
- **The Senate's proposal makes clear that the federal government cannot pay more than its share.** This is the case even if a state pays less than what would be required to meet the cost-share requirement for its full caseload. But the Senate proposal and the underlying SNAP law also don't provide authority to states to cut benefits below the amount specified in the statute**.** If the federal benefit formula makes a family eligible for $300 in SNAP benefits, federal law and the Senate proposal would set the family's benefit at $300.

How Could States Meet the Requirement?

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[4] U.S. Agriculture Department, "SNAP Payment Error Rates," updated June 30, 2025, https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/qc/per.

States must balance their budgets each year.[5] If a state must pay between 5 and 15 percent of the cost of SNAP benefits, it would be forced to choose among three options:

- Cut other state spending or raise taxes to fully meet the requirement.
- Find a way to cut the number of eligible low-income households receiving SNAP so that it can afford to pay the state share of the federal benefit for all households that remain in the program.
- Opt out of SNAP entirely.

A state that can afford to pay some — but not all — of its required cost share would have to take away SNAP benefits from a large number of eligible households. Suppose a state's cost share in a year is projected to be $200 million. If the state decided it could only afford to contribute $100 million, *it would have to terminate food assistance to about half of its caseload.*

States have limited options on how they can cut their SNAP caseloads. They would largely have to rely on adding red tape — like making more people travel in person to an office to access benefits and requiring additional unnecessary paperwork— to cut people from SNAP. These kinds of access barriers often fall hardest on households who are working (because they can't take time off of work to go to SNAP offices in-person) and people who are ill, disabled, or older.

Many states' budgets are already strained and states could face even greater difficulties making up for federal cuts if their economies sour. Other cost shifts in the Senate Agriculture Committee plan, including cuts to administrative funding and new costs to implement expanded and expensive work requirements, and cost shifts in Medicaid that the Senate Finance Committee may propose could make it more difficult for states to fill in for the retreat in the federal commitment to combatting hunger.

The following tables help show how states could be affected by this new cost shift.

Table 1 provides data on each state's error rate in 2024 and its lowest and highest error rate over the 2003-2024 period. Error rates remained elevated in 2024 due to lingering post-pandemic issues, but were lower than in 2023 in 30 states and nationally. All but one state had an error rate at or above 6 percent over the last couple of decades.

Table 2 illustrates how much states are projected to have to pay to fully meet their cost share obligation if they are hit with a 5, 10, or 15 percent cost share. If a state cannot pay this amount, it would have to significantly reduce the number of households getting food assistance or opt out of the program entirely.

Table 3 provides some comparisons between the SNAP costs states could newly face and other items in their state budgets. This helps put the amount of money states could be required to come up with into context.

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[5] Tax Policy Center, "What are state balanced budget requirements and how do they work?" updated January 2024, https://taxpolicycenter.org/briefing-book/state-and-local-tax/fiscal-federalism-and/what-are-state-balanced.

TABLE 1

States' SNAP Error Rates Vary Substantially; Based on Past History, Most States Could Face a 5% or Higher Cost-Shift at Some Point Under Senate Proposal

Under the Senate proposal, states with an error rate equal to or greater than 6% would be required to pay 5 to 15% of food benefit costs for the first time. Only one state has never had an error rate above 6% in data back to 2003 (the beginning of the current SNAP sanction system).

State	2024 State Combined Payment Error Rate	Lowest Error Rate Between 2003 and 2024	Highest Error Rate Between 2003 and 2024
Alabama	8.32	1.70	8.32
Alaska	24.66	0.76	60.37
Arizona	8.84	4.68	11.39
Arkansas	9.56	4.02	11.31
California	10.98	3.63	13.40
Colorado	9.97	2.72	9.97
Connecticut	10.25	4.94	10.50
Delaware	12.37	1.15	22.80
District of Columbia	17.38	3.03	20.26
Florida	15.13	0.42	15.13
Georgia	15.65	1.99	15.65
Guam	9.72	4.24	18.01
Hawai'i	6.68	3.04	21.78
Idaho	3.59	1.25	11.31
Illinois	11.56	1.70	11.56
Indiana	9.52	2.60	10.46
Iowa	6.14	3.36	12.47
Kansas	9.98	0.75	12.07
Kentucky	9.11	4.09	9.11
Louisiana	6.62	1.44	8.00
Maine	10.26	2.16	19.12
Maryland	13.64	2.12	35.56
Massachusetts	14.10	2.87	14.10
Michigan	9.53	2.70	13.00
Minnesota	8.98	3.95	9.78
Mississippi	10.69	1.16	10.69
Missouri	9.42	1.50	13.03
Montana	8.89	2.71	9.97
Nebraska	5.50	1.54	7.34
Nevada	5.94	2.86	8.25
New Hampshire	7.57	3.01	12.53

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State	2024 State Combined Payment Error Rate	Lowest Error Rate Between 2003 and 2024	Highest Error Rate Between 2003 and 2024
New Jersey	14.33	1.32	35.70
New Mexico	14.61	3.73	14.61
New York	14.09	3.33	14.09
North Carolina	10.21	2.23	19.07
North Dakota	7.91	1.73	9.51
Ohio	9.01	2.30	9.17
Oklahoma	10.87	3.78	10.87
Oregon	14.06	3.54	22.99
Pennsylvania	10.76	2.71	16.61
Rhode Island	12.29	3.67	22.66
South Carolina	9.25	1.09	22.57
South Dakota	3.28	0.75	3.28
Tennessee	9.47	1.08	19.79
Texas	8.32	0.63	8.32
Utah	5.74	2.11	6.61
Vermont	5.13	2.76	9.66
Virgin Islands	3.54	1.93	10.29
Virginia	11.50	0.44	11.50
Washington	6.06	0.77	9.33
West Virginia	9.43	4.90	10.98
Wisconsin	4.47	1.11	9.32
Wyoming	5.12	2.42	9.63
United States	10.93	3.20	11.68

Source: SNAP Quality Control Payment Error Rates, https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/qc/per

TABLE 2

States Would Be Hit Hard by the 5% to 15% Cost-Shift in the Senate Agriculture Committee's Reconciliation Proposal

State	State Share of 5% Cost-Shift in FY2028 (millions) (6% to 7.99% error rate)	State Share of 10% Cost-Shift in FY2028 (millions) (8% to 9.99% error rate)	State Share of 15% Cost-Shift in FY2028 (millions) (10% or higher error rate)
Alabama	$86	$172	$258
Alaska	$12	$25	$37
Arizona	$100	$200	$300
Arkansas	$27	$55	$82
California	$615	$1,230	$1,844
Colorado	$65	$130	$194
Connecticut	$44	$89	$133
Delaware	$13	$25	$38
District of Columbia	$16	$32	$48
Florida	$328	$657	$984
Georgia	$162	$325	$487
Guam	$6	$12	$18
Hawai'i	$36	$73	$109
Idaho	$14	$28	$42
Illinois	$222	$444	$666
Indiana	$71	$143	$214
Iowa	$26	$53	$79
Kansas	$20	$41	$61
Kentucky	$57	$115	$172
Louisiana	$95	$189	$283
Maine	$18	$36	$54
Maryland	$75	$149	$223
Massachusetts	$130	$260	$390
Michigan	$152	$304	$456
Minnesota	$43	$85	$128
Mississippi	$42	$84	$125
Missouri	$75	$150	$225
Montana	$8	$17	$25
Nebraska	$16	$33	$49
Nevada	$50	$100	$150

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New Hampshire	$8	$15	$23
New Jersey	$96	$191	$287
New Mexico	$51	$102	$153
New York	$366	$731	$1,095
North Carolina	$146	$292	$438
North Dakota	$6	$11	$17
Ohio	$158	$316	$473
Oklahoma	$75	$150	$224
Oregon	$79	$159	$238
Pennsylvania	$212	$424	$636
Rhode Island	$17	$34	$51
South Carolina	$64	$129	$193
South Dakota	$9	$18	$27
Tennessee	$81	$161	$242
Texas	$358	$717	$1,074
Utah	$19	$38	$57
Vermont	$7	$15	$22
Virgin Islands	$4	$7	$10
Virginia	$88	$176	$263
Washington	$95	$191	$286
West Virginia	$28	$56	$84
Wisconsin	$68	$136	$203
Wyoming	$3	$6	$8
United States	$4,664	$9,329	$13,979

Note: Based on each state's share of fiscal year 2024 benefit issuance and projected benefit costs in 2028 under the Congressional Budget Office's June 2024 baseline, assuming each state's share of the national total is the same as its share in fiscal year 2024, adjusted for a separate provision freezing the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan outside of inflation adjustments. These estimates do not account for other provisions in the bill that would directly cut food benefits and terminate eligibility for many SNAP participants, reducing each state's obligation. 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: U.S. Department of Agriculture SNAP Data for FY 2024, https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap.

TABLE 3

Senate Agriculture Committee SNAP Cost-Shift Would Force States to Make Painful Tradeoffs

Projected costs under proposed state payment of share of SNAP food benefit costs compared to other items in a selection of state budgets

State	5% match $ (millions)	5% match comparison	15% match $ (millions)	15% match comparison
Alabama	$86	Annual state spending for the Department of Agriculture and Industries, which supports farmers, ensures food is safe to consume, and runs the state's farm to school program ($85m).	$258	Annual state spending for the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, which runs the highway patrol, issues driver's licenses, and runs state criminal investigations ($237m).
Alaska	$12	Annual state spending for the Alaska Performance Scholarship award, a merit-based scholarship program that supports high school students attending post-secondary institutions in the state ($12m).	$37	Annual state spending for foster care services, which serve approximately 3,000 children monthly ($34m).
Arizona	$100	Annual state spending for the community college system, which serves more than 118,000 students ($96m).	$300	Close to total the annual state spending for the Department of Forestry and Fire Management ($51m) and the Department of Public Safety ($264m) combined.
Arkansas	$27	Annual state spending for the Department of Agriculture, which develops and implements policies and programs to support agriculture, forestry, natural resources, and food safety ($28m).	$82	Two times annual state spending for higher education grants and scholarships including the Arkansas Future (ArFuture) program, which covers tuition and fees for students in STEM and high-demand fields ($41m).
California	$615	Half of annual state spending for the Housing Financial Assistance Program, which increases housing supply by providing loans and grants to develop and preserve safe and affordable housing for lower-income households ($1.2b).	$1,844	Annual state spending for the Department of Public Health, which protects and promotes health and well-being through health quality, health emergency response, and population health programs ($1.9b).
Colorado	$65	More than three-fourths of annual state spending for the Department of Agriculture, which supports farmers	$194	Two-thirds of annual state spending for the Department of Public Safety, whose responsibilities

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		and ranchers, ensures a safe food supply, and promotes environmental stewardship ($77m).		include the state highway patrol, Bureau of Investigation, and fire prevention and code enforcement ($284m).
Georgia	$162	Three times annual state appropriations for the Indigent Care Trust Fund, which supports rural and other health care providers, primarily hospitals, that serve medically indigent Georgians ($53m).	$487	Two times annual state spending for child welfare services, including investigating allegations of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect and providing services to protect children and strengthen families generally ($244m).
Kansas	$20	More than annual state spending for the Office of Veterans Services, which works to ensure all veterans have access to the benefits they earned through military service and provides long-term nursing and assisted living care ($16m).	$61	More than annual state spending for the Department of Agriculture, which supports and assists farmers, ranchers, food establishments, and agribusiness ($51m).
Louisiana	$95	Annual state spending for the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, whose services include food safety and inspection, forest and fire management, soil and water conservation, and food distribution ($93m).	$283	Nearly three times annual state spending for services for the aging population through the Office of Aging and Adult Services and the Office of Elderly Affairs, including senior centers and access to quality long-term care ($106m).
Maine	$18	Funding approved last year for a rent relief pilot program under the Maine State Housing Authority that pays up to $800 per month directly to landlords for up to two years for people with low incomes who are at risk of eviction ($18m).	$54	More than annual state spending for the child care subsidy program, which provides subsidies for qualifying families and supports training for child care providers ($46m).

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State	5% match $ (millions)	5% match comparison	15% match $ (millions)	15% match comparison
Maryland	$75	Close to total annual state spending for grants to early childhood programs for at-risk students ($41m) and the Department of Aging ($41m) combined.	$223	Roughly half of annual state spending for the Department of State Police ($452m).
Massachusetts	$130	Total annual state spending for veterans' services ($106m) and transportation to school for elementary school students who are homeless ($28m) combined.	$390	Annual state spending for community colleges, which serve more than 77,000 students ($382m).
Michigan	$152	More than annual state spending for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, which promotes food safety and provides assistance to farmers ($137m).	$456	Roughly annual state spending for community colleges, which serve more than 280,000 students ($462m).
Mississippi	$42	Nearly four times annual state spending for the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, which supports farmers, ensures food safety, and helps market the state's agricultural products ($12m).	$125	More than annual state spending on public health programs, including testing drinking water, preventing and tracking infectious disease, and fire safety ($108m).
Missouri	$75	Roughly half of annual state spending for the Department of Economic Development, which supports businesses and helps develop a skilled workforce ($154m).	$225	Two times annual state spending for the Department of Agriculture, which supports farmers and promotes the state's agriculture industry ($114m).
Nebraska	$16	Roughly half of annual state spending for financial assistance and scholarship support for Nebraska students attending state universities and community colleges ($30m).	$49	Close to total annual state spending for early childhood education programs ($11m), public health ($11m), programs to support the aging population ($12m), and rural broadband ($20m) combined.

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State	5% match $ (millions)	5% match comparison	15% match $ (millions)	15% match comparison
New Jersey	$96	Three-fourths of annual state spending for support and services for military members, veterans, and their families ($125m).	$287	Annual state spending for county colleges, which serve more than 168,000 students ($290m).
New York	$366	Roughly annual state spending for the Department of Environmental Conservation, which protects the state's natural resources and prevents and abates water and air pollution ($351m).	$1,095	More than annual state spending for the state police, who promote highway safety and help local police respond to criminal activity such as burglaries, missing children, assaults, robberies, and homicides ($981m).
North Carolina	$146	Annual state spending for the Division of Public Health, which works to stop the spread of infectious diseases, ensures food and water safety, and provides supports to protect and promote the health and well-being of infants and mothers ($134m).	$438	Total annual state spending for child development and early education, which supports the Smart Start program, subsidized child care, and pre-K programs ($254m), and agriculture and consumer services ($182m), which promote and improve agriculture, agribusiness, and forest management, combined.
Ohio	$158	Annual state spending for the Department of Natural Resources, which oversees state parks, wildlife resources, forest management, and regulation of the state's oil and natural gas industry ($163m).	$473	Three-quarters of annual state spending for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services ($600m).
Pennsylvania	$212	About 1.5 times annual state spending for the Attorney General's office, which prosecutes organized crime and public corruption, conducts statewide criminal investigations, and manages drug enforcement programs ($144m).	$636	More than two times annual state spending for community colleges, which serve more than 160,000 students ($277m).

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Texas	$358	More than five times annual state spending for the Texas Veterans Commission, which provides job assistance, health care, and educational access for veterans ($67m).	$1,074	Roughly one-quarter of annual state spending for the Department of Criminal Justice, which manages more than 146,000 people in state correctional facilities and supervises people on parole or mandatory supervision ($4.3b).

Sources: CBPP analysis of state budget documents; Katie Bergh and Dottie Rosenbaum, "House Agriculture Committee Proposal Would Worsen Hunger, Hit State Budgets Hard," CBPP, May 13, 2025, https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/house-agriculture-committee-proposal-would-worsen-hunger-hit-state-budgets