

Historic SNAP Cuts Threaten Families, States, and the Future of Food Assistance

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The House Agriculture Committee just [released](#) a reconciliation bill that includes historic, devastating cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Make no mistake: this proposal would slash billions in basic food assistance for millions of people across the country.

These cuts do not exist in a vacuum. They represent a direct threat to economic resilience, public [health](#), [rural food systems](#), and [community stability](#) across the United States. While framed as a fiscal measure, the impact of these changes would ripple across entire sectors, affecting families, [farmers](#), [grocers](#), schools, and [local governments](#).

One of the most alarming provisions in this bill is a quiet but profound restructuring of SNAP's funding model. Right now, SNAP is a federal-state partnership. The federal government pays 100% of food benefits and shares administrative costs equally with states.

This [proposal](#) would reverse that.

- Beginning in FY2028, states would be required to pay at least 5 percent of food benefit costs—and up to 25 percent if they have high error rates. For example, if it were enacted today (based on the latest [FY 2023](#) payment error rates), only seven states and territories would land at the 5 percent number, while 28 states and territories would land at 25 percent.
- Federal support for administrative costs would drop from 50 percent to just 25 percent – shifting 75 percent of the burden costs onto states. This is on top of now having to pay for a share of benefit costs.

That's not a budget adjustment! It is a fundamental dismantling of SNAP as an entitlement program. Some of the changes are delayed until after the next midterm elections and the current administration ends, allowing lawmakers to claim they are not cutting SNAP, while forcing states to do it for them, with no federal accountability until future election cycles.

States cannot afford this cost shift—not during stable times, and certainly not during a future recession. This proposal would:

- Undermine the foundation of SNAP as a responsive, reliable safety net.
- Leave families vulnerable to hunger and hardship, particularly with increased food prices.
- Force states to choose between cutting eligibility or absorbing unmanageable costs.

Here's a brief breakdown of other key provisions and their consequences:

- **Thrifty Food Plan Caps**
Limits benefit reevaluations to every five years and mandates cost neutrality.

Impact: Prevents benefits from increasing alongside actual food costs, risking benefit erosion over time.

- **Expanded Work Requirements, i.e., Time Limits** (must work at least 20 hours a week; if not, can only receive SNAP for 3 months in a 3-year period).

Raises the work requirement age for Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) from 54 to 64, narrows the definition of a dependent child to those under age 7, and limits caregiving exemptions.

Impact: Significantly expands the population subject to time limits, increasing the risk of food insecurity for older adults and caregivers of young children.

- **Waiver Restrictions**

Makes it harder for states to waive ABAWD work requirements; lowers exemptions from 8 percent to 1 percent.

Impact: States lose flexibility to respond to economic conditions, particularly in rural or high-unemployment areas.

- **Utility Deduction Limits**

Restricts utility deductions to households with elderly or disabled members only.

Impact: Families with high utility costs will receive fewer SNAP benefits.

- **General Work Requirement Age Increase**

Expands work requirement age to 18–64; narrows parent exemptions to children under 7.

Impact: More adults—including those near retirement age—must meet work requirements to stay eligible.

- **Zero Tolerance for Errors**

Reduces payment error tolerance from \$37 to \$0.

Impact: Penalizes states for minor mistakes, potentially disincentivizing enrollment efforts.

Real-Life Consequences for Families

Consider a low-wage unmarried couple in a rural area with two homeschooled children over age 7. The father works full time, and the mother has a small part-time job that allows her to care for the children and educate them at home. Today, SNAP and the father's income cover their basic needs. Under this proposal, the mother would be required to work at least 20 hours per week to maintain eligibility—because caring for children is no longer considered a valid exemption unless the person is married and resides with an individual who complies with the SNAP time limit work requirement. That means fewer groceries and more stress for a family already on the edge.

Or imagine a single working mom who relies on her 62-year-old retired mother to care for her 8-year-old child before and after school. The grandmother receives SNAP benefits to supplement her limited income. Under this bill, the grandma would need to find and maintain a 20-hour-per-week job to keep her benefits, even though she's already providing critical, unpaid care.

Or consider a state agency forced to lay off employees because it can no longer afford the increased administrative costs, even though it's still expected to meet strict timeliness and error rate requirements. These cuts don't stop at government offices. They also impact local grocery stores that operate on thin margins; when families in the community lose SNAP benefits, these stores see fewer customers and declining sales, threatening their survival.

These are not rare edge cases, they are everyday realities for millions of Americans.

Timeline: The [House Agriculture Committee](#) — which has jurisdiction over SNAP — is scheduled to begin its [budget reconciliation markup tonight](#), May 13 (opening statements), 7:30 p.m., and will continue through May 14. House leadership is pushing for a floor vote on the entire reconciliation package (SNAP, Medicaid, expanding tax cuts to the wealthy while cutting the Child Tax Credit, and other provisions) before the Memorial Day recess, scheduled to begin on May 23.

Take Action Now: Visit FRAC's [Legislative Action Center](#) for advocacy resources to oppose the proposed draconian cuts to SNAP, including sending a message directly to your Members of Congress via [FRAC's Action Network](#), FRAC's [state](#) SNAP participation fact sheets, [budget reconciliation leave-behind](#), and [quotes](#) from SNAP participants on why SNAP matters. Be sure to use [FRAC's digital toolkit](#) to get loud on social media. House Agriculture Committee resources can be found [here](#).