The Budget Reconciliation Bill Would Leave Children and Families Hungry and Shift Costs onto States

The Budget Reconciliation Would Leave Children and Families Hungry

Undocumented immigrants are **ineligible** for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Under current law, access to SNAP for immigrant communities is limited to certain "qualified non-citizens" such as green card holders, refugees, and asylees. Even green card holders must often wait five years before even being eligible for SNAP.[1]

As passed by the House, the budget reconciliation bill would further restrict SNAP eligibility to just citizens, green card holders, and certain Cubans and Pacific Islanders, stripping away coverage from previously eligible immigrants such as refugees, asylees and other humanitarian immigrants.

Access to nutrition can have a serious impact on a child's mental and physical well-being in both the short- and long-term, yet immigrant families disproportionately experience food insecurity.[2] Additional barriers to food assistance will harm the millions of children who live in households with an immigrant parent. Because SNAP is provided per qualified household member, a parent losing access to SNAP means that a household could receive up to $244 less per month to help put food on the table.[3]

Excluding Families from SNAP Hurts the Economy and Shifts Costs to Food Banks and States

The need for food does not vanish if families become excluded from SNAP. Instead of the well-resourced federal government providing food, the assistance for families and children to avoid food insecurity would instead come from already stressed state budgets, food banks, and pantries.

Excluding families will also have costs to our economy. Every dollar that goes to SNAP results in up to $1.80 in economic ripple effects that benefit farmers, grocery stores, truck drivers, payment processors, food manufacturers, and others as the funds circulate in the local economy.[4] Less funding for SNAP means families are spending less, impacting more than **260,000 SNAP authorized retailers** nationwide.[5] SNAP is one of the most responsive programs to recessions, but denying people access to it means they won't be spending benefits and stimulating the economy, thereby making it harder and longer for our economy to recover. The exclusion of hundreds of thousands of lawfully present immigrants could cost the national GDP between $1 to $1.7 billion in growth in just the first year, a far larger cost than the $4 billion the Congressional Budget Office estimates the government will save from these cuts over a decade.[6]

Barriers Create Chilling Effects for Children

Mixed-status families include both individuals who are eligible for SNAP and those who are not. Provisions in the budget reconciliation bill could deter eligible U.S. citizen children from participating in SNAP and other supports they are entitled to. Families often navigate multiple basic needs programs, and exacerbating the chilling effect could undermine maternal and child health: if families are discouraged from accessing SNAP, they may also avoid enrolling in WIC, Medicaid, or school meals out of fear or confusion.

During the first Trump Administration, attacks on access to public benefits, including SNAP, resulted in participation of children in immigrant families dramatically decreasing at a rate nearly triple that of children with U.S. citizen parents.[7] Renewed efforts to bar immigrants from coverage will result in increased food insecurity for children nationwide, which hurts people today and our nation tomorrow.

SNAP Gives Children Better Health and Economic Outcomes

Research shows that SNAP improves children's outcomes at all stages of their life. This starts before birth; babies are born healthier if their mother was able to access SNAP during her pregnancy.[8] In childhood, SNAP reduces school absences and developmental health issues. And, finally, individuals who had access to SNAP as children complete more education, have higher earnings, and live longer.[9] Given the significant gains to recipients, economists estimate that these benefits outweigh the costs of providing SNAP at a ratio of over 60 to 1.[10]

- An estimated **50,000 children** could be barred from SNAP due to the budget reconciliation's restrictions for lawfully present immigrants.[11]
- Refugees and asylees would become newly ineligible for SNAP under the budget reconciliation bill. **About 40 percent of refugees and asylees are children.**[12]
- Almost half of all households utilizing SNAP–**47 percent**–have children.[13]
- Over **2.4 million U.S. citizen children** in a household participating in SNAP live with a noncitizen.[14]

The Budget Reconciliation Would Leave Children and Families Hungry

Community and Economic Impacts of the Budget Reconciliation's SNAP Exclusions			
State	**Refugees, Asylees, and those granted a stay of deportation, who would lose access to SNAP**	**Citizen Children enrolled in SNAP who live with a noncitizen**	**Potential loss in GDP from excluding refugees and asylees from SNAP in the first year**
United States	**431,000**	**2,482,000**	**$1,759,514,400**
Arizona	6,000	64,000	**$23,457,600**
Arkansas	1,000	7,000	**$4,125,600**
California	30,000	710,000	**$122,472,000**
Colorado	4,000	33,000	**$16,070,400**
Connecticut	5,000	13,000	**$20,520,000**
Florida	180,000	184,000	**$723,168,000**
Georgia	3,000	79,000	**$12,117,600**
Idaho	1,000	4,000	**$3,866,400**
Illinois	11,000	134,000	**$45,619,200**
Indiana	7,000	15,000	**$29,635,200**
Iowa	4,000	6,000	**$14,688,000**
Kansas	3,000	4,000	**$11,793,600**
Kentucky	2,000	10,000	**$7,041,600**
Maine	1,000	2,000	**$3,801,600**
Massachusetts	11,000	45,000	**$46,569,600**
Michigan	15,000	19,000	**$56,052,000**
Minnesota	4,000	15,000	**$13,564,800**
Missouri	5,000	16,000	**$20,736,000**
Nebraska	7,000	10,000	**$27,064,800**
Nevada	5,000	38,000	**$17,928,000**
New Hampshire	1,000	1,000	**$3,607,200**
New Jersey	1,000	61,000	**$4,190,400**
New Mexico	2,000	32,000	**$8,208,000**
New York	25,000	144,000	**$112,860,000**
North Carolina	8,000	80,000	**$29,894,400**
North Dakota	1,000	1,000	**$4,125,600**
Ohio	7,000	21,000	**$28,879,200**
Oklahoma	1,000	19,000	**$3,952,800**
Oregon	2,000	41,000	**$7,603,200**
Pennsylvania	16,000	34,000	**$61,516,800**
Rhode Island	1,000	11,000	**$4,298,400**
South Dakota	1,000	1,000	**$4,320,000**
Texas	25,000	367,000	**$101,520,000**
Utah	3,000	7,000	**$12,182,400**
Virginia	14,000	38,000	**$53,524,800**
Washington	15,000	63,000	**$58,320,000**
Wisconsin	3,000	26,000	**$10,432,800**

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Endnotes

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