



ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

PROTECT MEDICAID, HOUSING, AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS SERVING THE MOST VULNERABLE

The federal budget is a moral document that must prioritize care for vulnerable individuals, families and communities. Investment in people and communities creates a stronger, safer, healthier country where we all can thrive. Whether we are Black, Brown, or white, or urban or rural, everyone deserves health care, housing, and food! House Republicans have proposed to reduce the federal deficit with cuts to vital human needs programs that will leave millions without food, housing, and healthcare. As a condition for lifting the debt ceiling, these members want spending cuts and structural changes to programs like Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, and housing vouchers – benefits received by our neighbors living in, or close to, poverty. They want to place the burden of paying down our nation’s debt on those with the fewest resources. There is no economic challenge facing the country that can be morally or practically solved on the backs of the poor. As Congress faces crucial fiscal decisions in the coming months, it is imperative that NETWORK and our Spirit-filled supporters advocate to protect and strengthen the resources that provide nourishment, security, and dignity.

While thoughtful conversations about deficit reduction may be reasonable, attacking critical supports to housing, health, and food benefits is not. Instead, wealthy corporations and billionaires must simply pay a fairer share of taxes to invest in our nation’s future. Policymakers should also look to prevent waste in military spending, stop tax evasion by the wealthy, and cease benefits lavished on large corporations.

What Congress Should Do Now

We urge Congress to reject cuts to housing, health care, and food programs – or the implementation of new bureaucratic hurdles that make access to resources more difficult.

- **Medicaid** covers [more than 93 million people](#), providing low-cost, efficient health care to low-income children, adults, people with disabilities, and seniors. Affordable Care Act premium tax credits have made care more affordable for millions of low-, moderate-, and middle-income households. Some policymakers have proposed to [cut Medicaid by over one-third](#) along with the Children’s Health Insurance Program and the repeal of the ACA premium tax credits. This will strip health coverage from millions of people.
- **Housing** programs are critical investments that help people with low income get, or maintain, a roof over their heads. There is a national shortage of approximately 7 million affordable homes for people with the lowest incomes. Without adequate funding for federal affordable housing and homeless assistance programs, households with the lowest incomes will continue to live one missed paycheck away from housing instability, eviction, and, in the worst cases, homelessness. Given the tremendous need for federal housing investments, our nation cannot afford dramatic cuts. Instead, Congress should fund these programs at the highest level possible to serve more households struggling for shelter.

- The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**, our nation’s most significant anti-hunger program, promotes economic security, health, and well-being. SNAP has proven to be a crucial tool for mitigating food hardship and supporting local economies during the pandemic. A [number of studies](#) have shown SNAP to reduce food insecurity by as much as 30 percent, and even more among children. SNAP participants report better health outcomes than comparable non-participants, both short- and long-term. Children with SNAP benefits were 5 percent less likely to suffer heart disease as adults compared to similar children without such benefits, were 16 percent less likely to be obese, and 18 percent more likely to have finished high school.
- The **Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**, serves approximately 6 million pregnant, postpartum, and nursing individuals and their infants and children who are low income and identified by a health professional as at “nutritional risk.” WIC only provides nutritionally important foods needed by pregnant and postpartum individuals and young children, such as milk, infant formula, baby food, whole grain bread, fruits, and vegetables.

Congress must reject efforts to tie new bureaucratic hurdles and time limits to assistance:

Introducing additional and burdensome regulations, such as work requirements and time limits, makes human needs programs less effective and more costly, and harms our nation’s most vulnerable people. **Justifications for work requirements rest on the false assumption that people who receive benefits do not work and must be compelled to do so. These assumptions are rooted in stereotypes based on race, gender, disability status, and class.** They ignore the realities of the low-paid labor market, ongoing labor market discrimination, the lack of childcare, and paid sick and family leave. Those who shame and blame people for struggling, also fail to see how caring for sick or disabled family members affect people’s lives.

Take Action: Call Your Members of Congress Now*!

*Dial 1-888-897-9753 to reach your House Representative

 *Dial 1-888-496-3502 to reach your Senators

(Call this number two times to reach both Senators.)

When you call, here's what you might say:

"Hello, my name is [YOUR NAME] from [YOUR TOWN]. I want to ask [MEMBER OF CONGRESS’S NAME] to protect SNAP, WIC, Medicaid, housing, and other vital human needs programs from any harmful budget cuts. Hard working families, people with disabilities, kids aging out of foster care, and others who need the life-affirming support that our budget provides, are our neighbors. When low wages, high food and housing costs, and expensive health care are unaffordable for them, our shared economy must provide assistance. As a person of faith, I believe there are enough resources for all of us to thrive in God’s beloved community, if our leaders make the choice to do so. [MEMBER OF CONGRESS’S NAME], ensuring that people have uninterrupted access to health care, food, and housing assistance when they are in dire need is the choice our Congress must make.

