



Proposal threatens SNAP assistance to children, families, elderly

The Trump Administration has proposed changes in a key SNAP (food stamps) policy which, if implemented, would take away food assistance from an estimated 3.1 million people nationally, mainly working families with children, seniors and people with disabilities. The proposed rule change would make it harder for struggling people to put food on the table.

What does the rule do?

The proposal would end the practice of allowing low-income, working people whose gross incomes are somewhat higher than the poverty level to receive SNAP benefits. The plan would also add an asset test, meaning certain assets, such as bank accounts or cars, would be considered when determining whether a person qualifies for SNAP and the level of monthly assistance. People with even meager savings could be hurt.

How will this affect New Jersey?

In New Jersey, an estimated 68,000 residents would lose this critical food aid. That includes 26,000 children 18 and under, 15,000 residents over age 60 and 27,000 people between the ages of 18 and 59, according to the New Jersey Department of Human Services.

Many of the children affected could also lose access to free school meals, as many are directly qualified to receive meals through the SNAP application process. Once they no longer qualify for SNAP, the free meals could also be cut, putting their health and learning at risk.

In addition, this proposal would harm local economies. SNAP pumps more than one billion dollars into local retail stores in New Jersey. This cut would result in \$33 million **fewer** dollars flowing into these local businesses, according to state statistics.

What is SNAP and why is it important?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's first line of defense against hunger. In New Jersey, nearly 690,000 people, including about 319,000 children, received this monthly assistance. Without this aid, families, senior citizens and others will struggle to feed themselves and their children.

Why is this happening now?

Last year, an effort was made to cut SNAP by imposing punitive work requirements. When advocates across the nation rallied against that harmful proposal, Congress rejected the provision in the Farm Bill, which governs policies and funding for SNAP. By making this new change through the rule making process, the Trump Administration does not need Congressional approval.

What can we do?

We need to send a strong message that the proposed rule would increase hunger and poverty in this country, especially for working families with children and seniors with even a small amount of savings.

The proposed rule was published in the Federal Register on July 24, kicking off a 60-day public comment period. All comments must be received by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service on or before September 23.

The Food Research & Action Center has set up a comment platform that makes it very easy for individuals and groups to submit comments opposing this proposed rule. The page provides suggested language, additional background information and a way to simply paste your comments into a form.

Share the link below with your networks via e-mail, social media and on your website and urge people to comment. The more people speaking up against this damaging proposal, the better our chances are of once again protecting this critical food assistance for millions of Americans.

Click here to comment: <http://bit.ly/2Ywv4tv>