

# Protect Nutrition & Healthcare Access in Pennsylvania

Over the past year, millions of people have lost access to nutrition assistance and healthcare because of congressional cuts to vital government programs. At the same time, Congress has ushered in historic spending increases on inhumane immigration enforcement and war. Federal budget decisions are moral choices, reflecting the priorities of our country.

## Food Assistance

The Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) helps 40 million Americans put food on the table each year.<sup>1</sup> The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) drastically cut SNAP by nearly \$200 billion.

The legislation did so in part by shifting administrative and benefit costs onto state governments. Because states cannot afford to absorb these costs, many have reduced enrollment of eligible individuals, and millions of people, including children, are losing vital assistance.

- Pennsylvania is projected to pay \$238000000 to continue covering SNAP recipients.<sup>2</sup>
- Already, 4 million Americans have lost access to SNAP, including 200976 people in Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup>
- Cuts to SNAP impose enormous social costs: A \$1 investment in a child's SNAP benefits can generate up to \$62 in returns through improving educational and professional outcomes as well as increased life expectancy.<sup>4</sup>

## Healthcare

In addition to SNAP, the OBBBA cut Medicaid by nearly a trillion dollars, the largest cut in the program's history. Medicaid provides government health insurance to 70 million Americans.

On top of the Medicaid cuts, Congress allowed the Affordable Care Act (ACA) enhanced premium tax credits to expire, meaning that people with low and moderate incomes with health care on the ACA exchanges now must pay much more to continue their existing health insurance.<sup>5</sup>

- Medicaid cuts threaten the healthcare of 340000 in Pennsylvania.<sup>6</sup>
- Premium tax credits recipients have seen their premiums rise by an average of \$1,000/year.<sup>7</sup> This rise in Affordable Care Act costs is projected to cause an additional 91000 in Pennsylvania to lose coverage.<sup>8</sup>
- With less funding from Medicaid and the expiration of the enhanced premium tax credits, hospitals—particularly rural hospitals—are under threat. At least 99 may shut down in the Deep South alone.<sup>9</sup>

## A Moral Budget

With the \$170 billion that Congress allocated to ICE in 2025, it instead could have instead funded Medicaid for 4 years in Pennsylvania.<sup>10</sup>

With the additional \$70 billion that Congress gave to the Department of Homeland Security in this year's budget reconciliation bill, it instead could have given states a two-year delay on the SNAP cost shift more than four times over.<sup>11</sup>

With the \$50 billion that Congress has spent on the war with Iran, it could have instead provided four years of school lunch for all 21 million children in the United States who receive it.<sup>12</sup>

By prioritizing policies that ensure nutrition assistance and health care for Pennsylvanians, Congress can help Pennsylvania to thrive.

## References

<sup>1</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "By the Numbers: Harmful Republican Megabill Takes Food Assistance Away From Millions of People," August 14, 2025, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/by-the-numbers-harmful-republican-megabill-takes-food-assistance-away-from>.

<sup>2</sup> Katie Bergh and Dottie Rosenbaum, "Congressional Delay of SNAP Cost Shift Urgently Needed to Protect Food Assistance for Low-Income Families," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, January 8, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/congressional-delay-of-snap-cost-shift-urgently-needed-to-protect-food>.

<sup>3</sup> Dottie Rosenbaum, Joseph Llobrera, Caitlin Nchako, and Luis Nuñez, "SNAP Tracker: People Are Losing Food Assistance as the Republican Megabill Is Implemented," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, June, 22, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-tracker-people-are-losing-food-assistance-as-the-republican-megabill>.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Llobrera, "SNAP Food Assistance Is a Sound Investment in Our Nation's Health, Well-Being, and Economy," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 4, 2025, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/snap-food-assistance-is-a-sound-investment-in-our-nations-health-well-being-and-economy>.

<sup>5</sup> Gina Azito Thompson, "Critical Condition," Southern Poverty Law Center, May 12, 2026, <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/reports/critical-condition/>.

<sup>6</sup> Alice Burns, Jaed Ortaliza, Justin Lo, Matthew Rae, and Cynthia Cox, "How Will the 2025 Reconciliation Law Affect the Uninsured Rate in Each State," KFF, August 20, 2025, <https://www.kff.org/uninsured/how-will-the-2025-reconciliation-law-affect-the-uninsured-rate-in-each-state/>.

<sup>7</sup> Matt McGough, Jared Ortaliza, Justin Lo, and Cynthia Cox, "What We Know So Far About 2026 ACA Marketplace Enrollment, Premiums, and Deductibles," KFF, May 19, 2026, <https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/what-we-know-so-far-about-2026-aca-marketplace-enrollment-premiums-and-deductibles/>.

<sup>8</sup> Burns, Ortaliza, Lo, Rae, and Cox, "How Will the 2025 Reconciliation Law Affect the Uninsured."

<sup>9</sup> Thompson, "Critical Condition."

<sup>10</sup> Adriel Orozco, "Senate Pushes Ahead with \$70 Billion More for ICE and CBP, Excluding Accountability Measures," American Immigration Council, May 8, 2026, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/senate-pushes-70-billion-funding-ice-cbp-accountability-measures/>; KFF, "Total Medicaid Spending," accessed June 1, 2026, <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/total-medicaid-spending/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>.

<sup>11</sup> Ximena Bustillo and Sam Gringlas, "ICE Is Now Funded Through End of Trump's Term, Raising Worries About Oversight" NPR, June 10, 2026, <https://www.npr.org/2026/06/09/nx-s1-5851664/house-reconciliation-vote-immigration-enforcement-ice-border-patrol>; Carah Hart, "Updated Senate Farm Bill Timeline Could Help Nutrition Talks, Brownfield Ag News, June 10, 2026, <https://www.brownfieldagnews.com/news/senate-farm-bill-timeline-update-could-help-snap-talks-lobbyist-says/>.

<sup>12</sup> Eleanor Watson, Oliva Gazis, and Kathryn Watson, "Iran War's True Cost Closer to \$50 billion, Not \$25 billion, U.S. Officials Say," CBS News, April 30, 2026, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-war-cost-closer-50-billion-us-officials/>; Melanie Hanson, "School Lunch Debt Statistics," Education Data Initiative, August 21, 2025, <https://educationdata.org/school-lunch-debt>.