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House budget bill slashes anti-hunger and rural programs to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy

The House must reject this bill that cuts food assistance programs and breaks apart the Farm Bill, leaving rural economies behind

MINNEAPOLIS—The House of Representatives is set to vote on a budget reconciliation bill this week that damages rural economies and livelihoods while cutting taxes for large corporations and the wealthy. The bill, which was shoved through the House Budget Committee on Sunday night, includes massive cuts to programs like Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which are widely accessed and relied upon by rural communities across the country.

The proposed cuts to SNAP will threaten the food security of millions of families who depend on it, at a time when demand at food shelves is already skyrocketing. The cuts would also shift massive costs to states already facing budget constraints.

“Families all over Minnesota depend on SNAP to put food on the table—37% of recipients are children, 17% are seniors, and 12% are individuals with disabilities,” says Erin McKee, community food systems program director at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP). “Beyond providing critical access to nutritious foods, SNAP supports businesses across the state, including farmers, grocers and small business owners. If these cuts go through, it will have a huge impact not only on Minnesota families, but on our rural economies and the state’s bottom line.”

The Republican-led bill breaks up the Farm Bill, electing to make changes to only sections of the nation’s most important food and agriculture policy, while leaving the rest of that bill behind. Specifically, the bill takes cuts from the SNAP program to increase farm subsidies and insurance payments for a handful of commodity crops, along with lifting payment limits that benefit the largest producers. Instead of debating reforms to those farm programs as part of a full Farm Bill, the House budget throws more money at them, at the expense of those facing hunger.

“This bill leans into a broken crop insurance system that does not measure true risk, disincentivizing climate mitigation and adaptation and punishing diversified farms at any scale,” says Michael Happ, IATP’s program associate for climate and rural communities. “By making this historic decision to break apart the Farm Bill, this House bill would leave behind critical programs, including those that support local food systems, rural businesses and on-farm renewable energy.”

“This bill hits rural economies hard in many ways, from cuts to Medicare and SNAP to ending renewable energy and infrastructure investments to providing a fast track for new pipeline permitting that could run through Midwest farmland,” says Ben Lilliston, director of rural strategies and climate change at IATP. “This bill protects corporate, wealthy interests, leaving rural communities to pay the price.”

For more information and history of the Farm Bill, including articles, podcasts, and more, visit www.iatp.org/farm-bill-23

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