

October 21, 2026

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

The unprecedented combination of out-of-control food price inflation under President Trump and the Trump administration's devastating cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) have trapped millions of Americans in a growing, nationwide food insecurity crisis. Grocery prices have surged under President Trump – up 2.7 percent since July 2025, with staples like tomatoes, bread, and ground beef rising faster than wages – due in part to President Trump's chaotic tariffs and war in Iran. At the same time, President Trump and Congressional Republicans' *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (OBBBA) slashed SNAP funding, and since then, over five million Americans, around 2 million of which are likely children,¹ have lost their food assistance.²

While Americans suffer, the administration has boasted about the drop in SNAP enrollment,³ and the President has said that he “love[s] the inflation”⁴ – even as food insecurity remains high.⁵ And although the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that OBBBA would cut nearly \$8 billion from SNAP in Fiscal Year 2026 alone,⁶ this projection fails to reflect the one-two punch that benefit cuts and rising grocery costs *together* have had on Americans. **A new analysis by my office seeks to quantify the combined impact of higher grocery prices and declining SNAP participation in a new “food misery index,” which reveals that, together, this combination has cost Americans more than \$22 billion since July 2025.** These outcomes are not inevitable. They are the direct result of President Trump's failed policies – and I urge the Department of Agriculture to act now to reverse them.

¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “SNAP Tracker: People Are Losing Food Assistance as the Harmful 2025 Republican Reconciliation Law Is Implemented,” Dottie Rosenbaum, Joseph Llobrera, Catlin Nchako, and Luis Nuñez, last updated August 26, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-tracker-people-are-losing-food-assistance-as-the-republican-megabill>.

² *Id.*

³ Yahoo News, “White House claims about food stamps suffer from a dramatic and consequential flaw,” Steve Benen, May 26, 2026, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/politics/articles/white-house-claims-food-stamps-185205036.html>.

⁴ BBC, “Trump says, ‘I love the inflation’ as US prices rise at fastest rate in three years,” Archie Mitchell, June 11, 2026, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0myzxjkw99o>.

⁵ Urban Institute, “Food Insecurity Remained High in 2025, As Safety Net Cuts Loom,” Michael Karpman, Elaine Waxman, Poonam Gupta, et al., March 18, 2026, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/food-insecurity-remained-high-2025-safety-net-cuts-loom>.

⁶ Congressional Budget Office, “Estimated Budgetary Effects of Public Law 119-21, to Provide for Reconciliation Pursuant to Title II of H. Con. Res. 14, Relative to CBO's January 2025 Baseline,” July 21, 2025, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2025-07/61570-pl119-21-2025Recon-CLB.xlsx>.

The Trump Administration's Policies Have Caused the Prices of Everyday Staples to Skyrocket

American families paid hundreds of dollars more for groceries in 2025 than they did in 2024 as grocery prices rose 2.3 percent – nearly double the prior year's pace.⁷ And costs continue to climb this year. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index, grocery prices have risen 2.6 percent since OBBBA passed.⁸ Costs of several everyday staples are rising at a faster annual pace than wages (up 3 percent in September 2026), including apples (7.5 percent), coffee (7.1 percent), fish (6.9 percent), tomatoes (6.8 percent), ground beef (5.4 percent), rice (4.3 percent), peanut butter (3.8 percent), and bread (3.3 percent).⁹ President Trump's policies are a key driver of these price increases. His chaotic and unlawful tariffs have raised the cost of food,¹⁰ a fact the administration implicitly conceded in late 2025 when President Trump signed an executive order exempting coffee, tea, tropical fruits, beef, and other agricultural products from reciprocal tariffs.¹¹ Treasury Secretary Bessent promised those exemptions would "bring prices down very quickly."¹² They have not.¹³ And President Trump's reckless and illegal war with Iran is pushing those costs higher still, as rising transportation and fertilizer costs put additional pressure on food prices and supply.¹⁴

President Trump and Congressional Republicans' Tax Legislation Has Ripped Away Over \$5 Billion in SNAP Benefits in the First Year of Implementation

As grocery prices continue to soar, President Trump and Congressional Republicans have taken a wrecking ball to SNAP – "chang[ing] almost every aspect" of the program and ripping food assistance away from millions of Americans.¹⁵ As a result, American households are receiving over five billion dollars less in food assistance to help them afford their groceries.¹⁶

⁷ U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, "Trumpflation: Donald Trump's Broken Promises on Affordability," minority staff report, https://www.banking.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/1_year_costs_report.pdf; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, "Food Price Outlook - Summary Findings," July 24, 2026, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-price-outlook/summary-findings>.

⁸ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic News Release, "Table 2. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U. S. city average, by detailed expenditure category," last updated October 14, 2026, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.t02.htm>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Axios, "Grocery inflation highest since 2022 as Trump tariffs pile up," Kelly Tyko and Ben Berkowitz, September 11, 2025, <https://www.axios.com/2025/09/11/trump-tariffs-grocery-prices-rise-cpi>.

¹¹ Executive Order 14360, "Modifying the Scope of the Reciprocal Tariffs With Respect to Certain Agricultural Products," November 14, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/25/2025-21203/modifying-the-scope-of-the-reciprocal-tariffs-with-respect-to-certain-agricultural-products>.

¹² NBC News, "Bessent says 'substantial' tariff relief on coffee and bananas is coming soon," Steve Kopack, November 12, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/trump-bessent-coffee-tariffs-rcna243425>.

¹³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic News Release, "Table 2. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U. S. city average, by detailed expenditure category," last updated August 12, 2026, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.t02.htm>.

¹⁴ Axios, "How higher oil prices translate to the grocery store," Emily Peck, April 6, 2026, <https://www.axios.com/2026/04/06/iran-war-food-inflation-oil>; Financial Times, "Fuel, munitions and food: Trump's Iran war rips across US economy, Claire Jones, Myles McCormick, Steff Chávez, Ian Hodgson, and Eva Xiao, May 11, 2026, <https://www.ft.com/content/145eccf2-14d8-4819-bd75-5674a5818f7c?syn-25a6b1a6=1>.

¹⁵ The New York Times, "The Trump Administration Has Changed Almost Every Aspect of Food Stamps," Linda Qiu, April 26, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/26/us/trump-administration-food-stamps.html>.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, "SNAP: Monthly Participation, Households, Benefits," September 11, 2026, <https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-4fymonthly-9.pdf>; This amount was calculated based on

In July 2025, OBBBA cut SNAP funding by nearly \$187 billion over the 2026 to 2034 period, according to the CBO's estimates – the biggest cut in the program's history.¹⁷ The law restricted program eligibility by expanding burdensome work requirements.¹⁸ The OBBBA also restricted eligibility for many lawful immigrants, capped future benefit increases, and cut benefit amounts through changes in the program's benefit calculations.¹⁹ And it shifted significant program costs onto states²⁰ – further stressing already-strained state budgets, which could prompt states to make additional cuts or withdraw from the SNAP program entirely.

Since OBBBA, 13 percent of SNAP beneficiaries – or over five million Americans – have lost their food assistance.²¹ This drop represents a total of \$5.1 billion in lost household SNAP benefits since July 2025.²² On top of that, families that remain eligible for SNAP have to contend with exorbitant price hikes at their grocery stores. States are also facing “new challenges” in implementing the law's draconian cuts.²³ While every state has experienced a decline in SNAP participation since OBBBA passed – with some experiencing declines of 20 to 50 percent²⁴ – some of the sharpest declines have been concentrated among the most vulnerable populations, including children. One recent analysis looking at the decline in SNAP participation across 28 states found that, of the 3.6 million Americans who lost their food assistance, nearly half – or approximately 1.5 million – were children.²⁵ Based on this decline, it is estimated that around 2 million children have lost food assistance nationwide since July 2025.²⁶ These sharp drops in

USDA data on monthly SNAP participation and monthly average benefit amounts. That data was used to estimate the number of households dropped from SNAP each month between August 2025 to June 2026 compared to July 2025 as the baseline, which was then multiplied by the average household SNAP benefit for that month to get that month's total loss in SNAP benefits. This amount is the aggregate of those months.

¹⁷ Center for American Progress, “SNAP Cuts Could Lead to 70,000 Avoidable Deaths,” Kyle Ross, March 19, 2026, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/snap-cuts-could-lead-to-70000-avoidable-deaths>; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Post-Megabill Drop in SNAP Participation is Steepest in Decades,” Joseph Llobrera, April 29, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/post-megabill-drop-in-snap-participation-is-steepest-in-decades>.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ The New York Times, “The Trump Administration Has Changed Almost Every Aspect of Food Stamps,” Linda Qiu, April 26, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/26/us/trump-administration-food-stamps.html>.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “SNAP Tracker: People Are Losing Food Assistance as the Republican Megabill Is Implemented,” Dottie Rosenbaum, Joseph Llobrera, Catline Nchako, and Luis Nuñez, last updated August 26, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-tracker-people-are-losing-food-assistance-as-the-republican-megabill>.

²² U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP: Monthly Participation, Households, Benefits,” September 11, 2026, <https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-4fymonthly-9.pdf>; This amount was calculated based on USDA data on monthly SNAP participation and monthly average benefit amounts. That data was used to estimate the number of households dropped from SNAP each month between August 2025 to June 2026 compared to July 2025 as the baseline, which was then multiplied by the average household SNAP benefit for that month to get that month's total loss in SNAP benefits. This amount is the aggregate of those months.

²³ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Post-Megabill Drop in SNAP Participation is Steepest in Decades,” Joseph Llobrera, April 29, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/post-megabill-drop-in-snap-participation-is-steepest-in-decades>.

²⁴ New York Times, “Faced With Piles of New Paperwork, People Are Losing Food Stamps,” Jason DeParle, July 20, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/20/us/politics/snap-food-stamps-arizona.html>.

²⁵ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “SNAP Tracker: People Are Losing Food Assistance as the Republican Megabill Is Implemented,” Dottie Rosenbaum, Joseph Llobrera, Catline Nchako, and Luis Nuñez, last updated August 26, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-tracker-people-are-losing-food-assistance-as-the-republican-megabill>.

²⁶ *Id.*

program participation are expected to worsen once new OBBBA requirements are fully implemented.²⁷

Despite these alarming trends, the administration continues to brag about the number of Americans it has kicked off of SNAP. In May, President Trump boasted that he “lifted nearly five million Americans off of food stamps,”²⁸ and, in April, you called it a sign that the Trump Administration is “working for the American public.”²⁹ You also claimed without evidence that the program is “rife with waste, fraud and abuse.”³⁰ But the dramatic decline in SNAP participation cannot be explained by an improvement in Americans’ economic condition or ability to afford their groceries, like the administration claims, especially as grocery prices become increasingly expensive.³¹ Instead, SNAP participation is falling because the Trump administration has intentionally kicked people off of the program – leaving Americans hungry and still struggling to afford food.

Food Insecurity is Rising as a Result of the Administration’s Disastrous Policies

American families are already bearing the brunt of these harmful policies. Researchers at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York recently found a “remarkable increase in food insecurity, particularly among lower-educated and lower-income households and households with young children.”³² Experts warn food insecurity will likely worsen – along with financial instability and negative health outcomes – as the OBBBA’s SNAP provisions continue to take effect and Americans encounter further barriers to program participation.³³ While the impact on affected families is worrisome in itself, rising food insecurity casts a long shadow over our communities and economy. Research shows that proper nutrition is critical for children’s physical and cognitive development.³⁴ Food insecurity is also associated with worse health, reduced productivity, lower educational attainment, and lower lifetime earnings.³⁵ These outcomes are avoidable and a direct result of policy choices.

²⁷ *Id.*; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “New Data Underscores SNAP Cost Shift’s Harm to Low-Income Families and State Budgets,” Katie Bergh and Dottie Rosenbaum, July 23, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/new-data-underscore-snap-cost-shifts-harm-to-low-income-families-and-state>.

²⁸ Yahoo! News, “White House claims about food stamps suffer from a dramatic and consequential flaw,” Steve Benen, May 26, 2026, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/politics/articles/white-house-claims-food-stamps-185205036.html>.

²⁹ The Hill, “New SNAP data confirm millions of Americans have reclaimed their freedom,” Brooke L. Rollins, April 1, 2026, <https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/5809553-snap-recipients-decline-trump>.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Post-Megabill Drop in SNAP Participation is Steepest in Decades,” Joseph Llobrera, April 29, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/post-megabill-drop-in-snap-participation-is-steepest-in-decades>.

³² Urban Institute, “Food Insecurity Remained High in 2025, As Safety Net Cuts Loom,” March 18, 2026, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/food-insecurity-remained-high-2025-safety-net-cuts-loom>; Liberty Street Economics, “Food Insecurity and Consumer Pessimism,” Gizem Kosar, Ishva Mehta, and Wilbert van der Klaauw, May 27, 2026, <https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2026/05/food-insecurity-and-consumer-pessimism>.

³³ Health Affairs Scholar, “Eroding the foundation: health and social needs of adult SNAP participants in an era of policy change,” Kevin H. Nguyen, Cristina M. Gago, and Stephanie Ettinger de Cuba, April 2026, <https://academic.oup.com/healthaffairsscholar/article/4/4/qxag086/8650848>.

³⁴ Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, “Food Insecurity and Child Development: A State-of-the-Art Review,” Danielle Gallegos, Arena Eivers, Peter Sondergeld, et al., August 26, 2021, <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/17/8990>.

³⁵ Joint Economic Committee Democrats, “The Economic Benefits of Child Nutrition,” August 8, 2024, <https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/democrats/2024/8/the-economic-benefits-of-child-nutrition>.

The “Food Misery Index”: Combination of Rising Grocery Prices and a Massive Decline in SNAP Participation Has Cost American Families Over \$22 Billion

Together, rising food prices and cuts to SNAP are trapping more and more American families in a food insecurity crisis. My office developed a “food misery index” to measure how much the combination of rising food prices and declining SNAP participation is costing American households. The index combines the more than \$17.2 billion in rising grocery prices³⁶ – calculated by inflation-adjusting consumer expenditures – with the more than \$5.1 billion in lost household SNAP benefits.³⁷ Together, the index reveals that, since the enactment of the OBBBA last year, the true cost of the Trump administration’s food assistance failures on American families exceeds \$22 billion.³⁸

The Administration and Congress Can and Must Reverse These Threats to Families

Instead of reaching for tools to mitigate these threats to families and working to bring down costs, the administration continues to sit idly by, peddling false narratives about the drop in SNAP participation, while delivering a one-two punch to American families who are struggling to put food on their tables. With grocery prices and food insecurity on the rise, I urge the administration to work with Congress to immediately reverse its harmful cuts to SNAP.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

³⁶ U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, “Trumpflation: Donald Trump’s Broken Promises on Affordability,” minority staff report, https://www.banking.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/1_year_costs_report.pdf; This amount was calculated using inflation-adjusted consumer expenditures following methodology from the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs minority staff report on affordability. Average monthly spending is 2024 annual household spending divided by 12. For each month since July 2025, that monthly spending is multiplied by the cumulative price change from July 2025 to that month. Because the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) did not publish monthly data for October, that month is estimated as the average of the September and November values. The monthly results are then summed and multiplied by the total number of consumer units in the expenditures survey (135,760,000). This methodology assumes that households purchase the same amount of food today that they consumed in 2024.

³⁷ U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP: Monthly Participation, Households, Benefits,” September 11, 2026, <https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-4fymonthly-9.pdf>; This amount was calculated based on USDA data on monthly SNAP participation and monthly average benefit amounts. That data was used to estimate the number of households dropped from SNAP each month between August 2025 to June 2026 compared to July 2025 as the baseline month, which was then multiplied by the average household SNAP benefit for that month to get that month’s total loss in SNAP benefits. This amount is the aggregate of those months.

³⁸ This amount was calculated by combining the calculation for the cost of rising grocery prices (\$17.2 billion) and the calculation for the loss in SNAP benefits (\$5.1 billion).