

CONGRESS, DON'T KEEP VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN LIMBO



REACH A BUDGET DEAL & KEEP THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OPEN

A government shutdown would cause confusion about program access and cut off critical and specifically nutritious foods from babies, young children, pregnant and post-partum women, and the elderly. American families, **including the over 420,000 Connecticut residents who rely on federal nutrition programs in order to live and work**, are on pins and needles wondering if they will have to worry about losing vital nutrition benefits or their jobs past the 45-day extension - right as we enter the holiday season. Nutrition programs have a vast economic impact on our local communities. Farmers and producers, farmers' markets, and grocers rely on WIC and FMNP Coupons - **in Connecticut alone, that is about \$4 million per month in spending that keeps many residents securely employed at local grocery stores and food retailers. Congress has a responsibility to reach a sound budget deal that supports vulnerable Americans and keep the government running so programs continue and people can keep working and feeding their families.**

PROTECT & STRENGTHEN SNAP IN THE FARM BILL

Congress must pass a bipartisan Farm Bill that supports - not slashes - the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and improves program access, benefit adequacy, and customer service/technology integrations. Priorities should include **lifting barriers** such as expanding SNAP eligibility for college students, repealing the arbitrary three-month time limit for ABAWD persons, eliminating the ban on SNAP for individuals with prior drug felony convictions, and eliminating discriminatory bans for immigrant persons. Other priorities should include lifting the unfair ban on hot and prepared foods - which would enable SNAP participants who do not have the means or ability to prepare their own food access a nutritious diet - and expanding online SNAP delivery. Efforts should also be made to **equip EBT cards with enhanced security** aligned with today's modern credit card technology to protect SNAP participants from benefit skimming and instill processes to recoup stolen benefits to affected clients. SNAP stimulates the economy and reduces poverty, food insecurity, health care expenditures, and the risk of chronic conditions. **Connecticut's poverty rate fell by 12% following the 2021 re-evaluation of the Thrifty Food Plan; cutting SNAP in the Farm Bill would be a step backwards, pushing people back into poverty.**

FULLY FUND THE WIC PROGRAM

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides access to supplemental food, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. **The current funding allotted to WIC falls short of the estimated nationwide demand - putting over 600,000 eligible participants, including 51,000 Connecticut children and mothers - at risk of being turned away from a program they qualify for.**

Further, more than half of babies in the US depend on WIC, and **in Connecticut alone, nearly 48,000 children and their mothers would have their much-needed prescription food ripped away from them in a government shutdown.**

