



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 30, 2017

Trump's Plan to Revise SNAP Draws Howls of Protests From Liberals

Modest revisions to the federal government's present SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) proposed by Trump's budget released last week have drawn [howls of protests](#) from predictable places. The *New York Times* and ThinkProgress are calling the cuts "full of horror," "backbreaking," and sufficient to "destroy the food stamp program."



What's proposed is a cut of less than \$20 billion a year to a program that currently costs taxpayers more than \$70 billion annually. It also would involve a modest shift of financial responsibility back to the states where it properly belongs.

The cuts are predicated on the impact the imposition of "work rules" would have on the number of those seeking benefits. Under Trump's proposal, recipients who cannot immediately find a job would be required to engage in "work activation" — supervised job searching, training, and community service. Otherwise they would no longer qualify for SNAP.

It is also predicated on a shift of some of the costs of the program to the states, which at present only pay some of the costs of administering the program. By the end of 10 years, the states would be picking up an estimated \$14 billion the federal government now spends on the program. This "skin in the game" begins at eight percent of total costs and increases annually to 25 percent.

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The proposal includes ending two block grant programs: the Community Development Block Grant and the Community Services Block Grant. These grants currently dump more than \$5 billion of taxpayer monies into local and state coffers with precious little accountability.

The *New York Times* took umbrage at the proposed cuts, as it has on anything proposed by Trump:

President Trump's budget plan would destroy the food stamp program, on the pretense that it discourages work. That's nonsense, because most adult recipients either work or are unable to do so because of age or disability. A more plausible explanation is that cutting food stamps would help to offset the cost of huge tax cuts for the rich.

The damage would likely be permanent. Food stamps would be reduced by 25 percent — \$193 billion over 10 years — much of which would be achieved by shifting costs to the states, which could not afford to make the payment, leading them to cut food aid.

ThinkProgress, the far left outfit funded by George Soros, said, "Trump wants to slash federal support for food assistance to the poorest Americans," adding that such "a deep cut could be backbreaking for the more than 40 million Americans — many of them children — who qualify for the nation's premier



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anti-hunger program.” After decrying the cuts, it blamed the proposal on Trump’s ideology: “Philosophically, the Trump administration is choosing to raise money off of food insecurity.”

What the proposal does is hope to build on Maine’s success in reining in its own out-of-control SNAP. In 2014, the state passed work requirements to obtain benefits that required applicants either to work part-time for 20 hours a week, enroll in a vocational training program, or volunteer to assist a local charity for a minimum of 24 hours per month. In December of that year, there were approximately 12,000 individuals enrolled in SNAP who were adults, weren’t disabled, and were without children at home. By the end of 2015, that number had dropped to 2,500, a decrease of nearly 80 percent.

In reviewing Maine’s success for the *US Herald*, Arthur Browne called it “a huge victory for welfare reform,” adding:

Do you see what Maine did there? They’re making people exhaust their possibilities for employment before giving them a handout. Finally, a state government has hit upon a great way to reward people for trying to get jobs and to punish those who sit around feeding off the taxes of the rest of the country.

It’s debatable whether Maine legislators intended to “punish” free-loaders. What isn’t debatable is that they, perhaps unknowingly, were following the advice of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Thessalonica: “For even while we were with you, we gave you this command: If anyone is unwilling to work, he shall not eat.”

Commentator Matthew Henry expanded on Paul’s admonition:

Christianity is not to countenance slothfulness ... but some expected to be maintained in idleness, and indulged a curious and conceited temper. They meddled with the concerns of others, and did much harm.

That is just one of the ripple effects of dependency. Trump’s proposal, if spread across all 50 states, would not only save billions, but begin the process of restoring to the states their proper role in making such decisions for themselves, to be paid for by themselves. For the record, the “general welfare” clause of the U.S. Constitution was never intended to be stretched so far as to allow the central government to spend as much as one dime in *welfare* (the definition of “welfare” at the time the Constitution was written did not mean a “handout”) for its citizens. While not mentioning such constitutional restraints, the Trump administration’s proposal would, if enacted, take a long step toward restoring the Constitution to its original intent.

Photo of a woman shopping for beef: [USDA](#)

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