



House Budget is an Attack on SNAP, School Meals, and Low Income Households

Gayle Carlson, CEO, Montana Food Bank Network

“The Montana Food Bank Network is committed to ending hunger in Montana, helping to provide food assistance through a network of nearly 150 local partners across the state. While the charitable food system plays a crucial role in the fight against hunger, it cannot make up for a weak social safety net – nor is it intended to.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is our nation’s most important anti-hunger program, helping nearly 60,000 Montana households put food on their tables each month. It’s also one of our most powerful and cost-effective tools to strengthen the economy and improve public health. And yet the program is under attack in the FY 2018 budget resolution passed by the House Budget Committee on Wednesday, July 19. The committee specifically calls for \$10 billion in cuts directed at agriculture, with reports suggesting those cuts would come primarily from SNAP, with an additional \$150 billion in suggested cuts from dramatic downsizing and restructuring of the program. These cuts would abandon our nation’s decades-long, bipartisan commitment to ensuring that no child in this country goes hungry.

In addition to slashing SNAP funding, the budget plan makes devastating cuts to programs that provide income assistance, job training, help for students struggling to afford college, and economic development. It also cuts \$1.6 billion from the successful Community Eligibility Provision, which allows high-need schools to serve school breakfast and lunch to all children at no cost.

The harsh cuts to SNAP and other poverty-reduction programs in the House budget will pull the rug out beneath the most vulnerable in our society, including children, the elderly, low-wage workers, and people with disabilities. Cuts to these programs will hurt real Montana families and individuals. Non-profits, state, and other local programs will not be able to fill the gap left by deep cuts at the federal level, resulting in increases in health care costs, decreased productivity in the workforce, and worse academic outcomes for the next generation.

A federal budget reflects our nation’s priorities and values. We urge Representative Gianforte, Senator Daines, and Senator Tester to reject the vision for America outlined in the House budget and oppose harmful cuts to SNAP and other critical anti-poverty programs.”

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The Montana Food Bank Network, located at 5625 Expressway in Missoula, secures and distributes donated and low cost food to nearly 150 hunger relief agencies throughout Montana. The Network works to meet the immediate need for food while advocating at the local, state, and national level for policy changes to help eliminate hunger and food insecurity in Montana. The Montana Food Bank Network is a member of Feeding America. For more information about the Montana Food Bank Network please visit www.mfbn.org.



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Our mission is to end hunger in Montana.