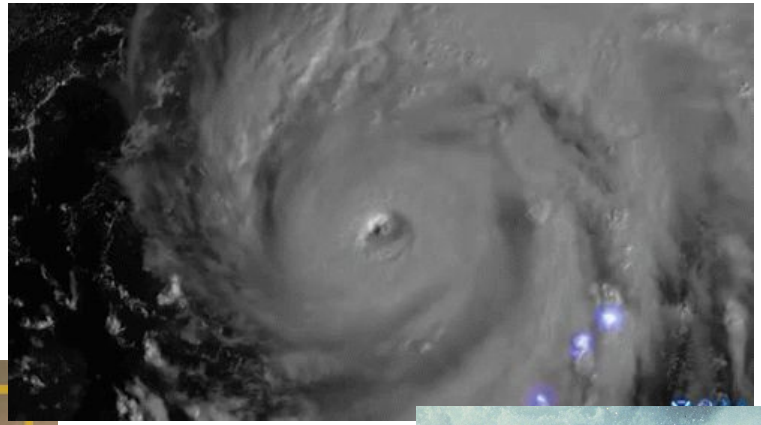
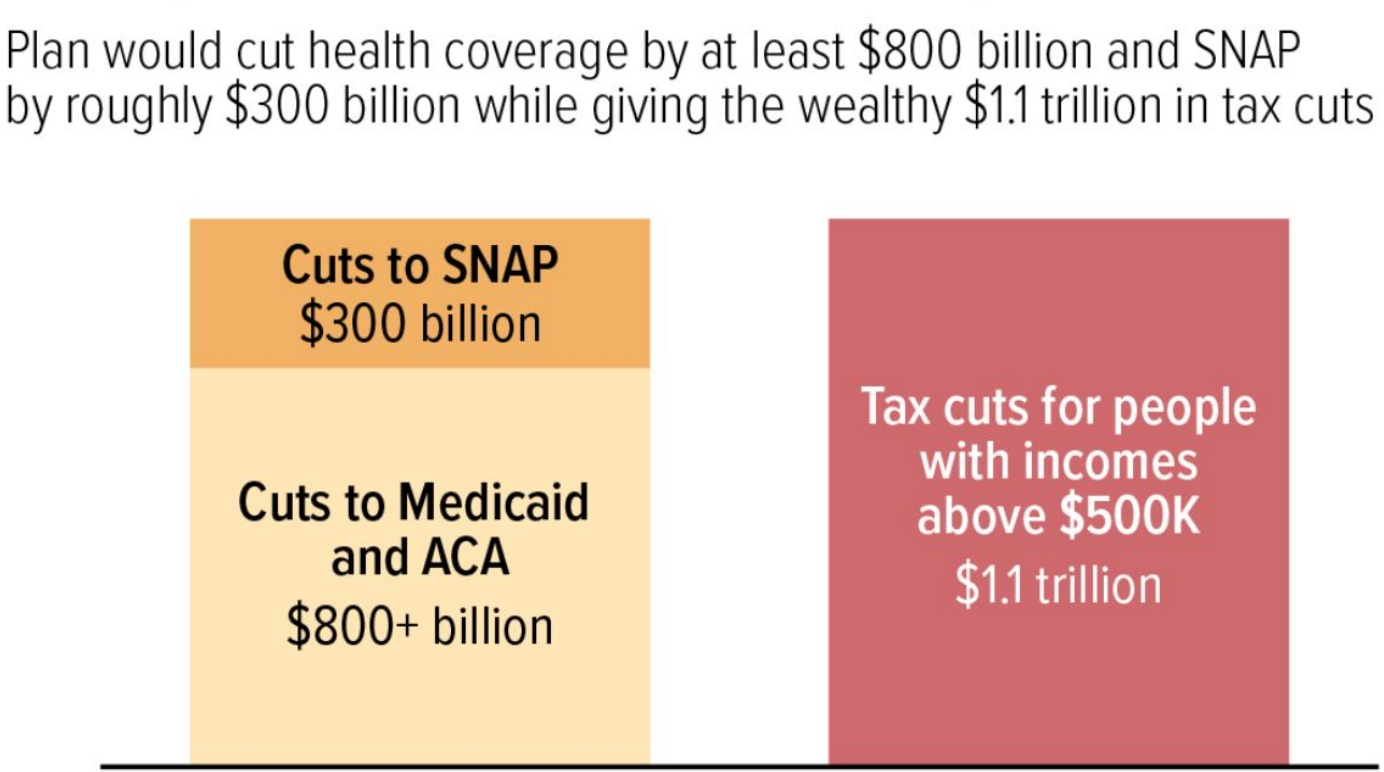
# Agenda

- Introduction
- The current moment: tornado, hurricane, with a Tsunami
- Overview - HR1 Impacts
  - Immigration
  - Cut to benefits funding based on “error rates”
  - Expanded harsh work requirements and restrictions on waiving these time harsh time limits
- Our framework + opportunities (come to Office Hours!)

# Current Moment




**Why are we talking about historic cuts to SNAP?**



# It’s Bad.  How Bad?

The bill:

- Makes the deepest cut in SNAP’s history
- Radically restructures the program
    - Creates cost shift
- Take food assistance away from households with kids, seniors, people with disabilities, and others
- Cut about $300 billion to largely fund tax cuts for the wealthy

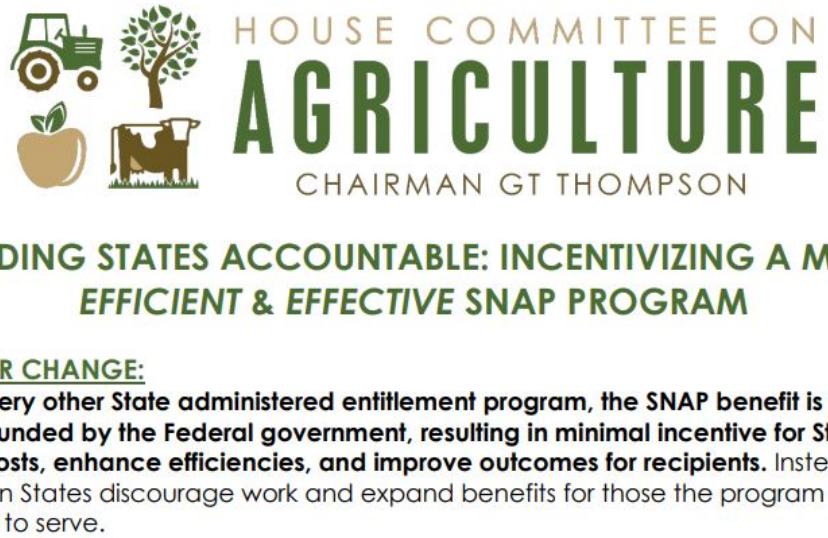
# Forcing States to Pay for Federal Benefit Cut

- Federal government will no longer cover 100% of SNAP benefits, instead they're making the state pay portions of benefits, depending on their "error rate".
- **CA's 2024 error rate is 11% - that means:**
  - **If that rate remains above 10% Starting in October 2027, CA will be required to pay 15%, or $1,844 million dollars.**
- The federal government is also cutting their funding to states for administrative work from 50% to 25% - another large budget hit.

Resource: Find your error rate and other SNAP data using CBPP landscape here!

# Pressuring states to make bad choices in name of reducing error rates

Republicans + the Trump administration are explicitly trying to force states to drop BBCE & other policies that facilitate access – ie all of the accessible policies CA has worked to implement!



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE
CHAIRMAN GT THOMPSON

**HOLDING STATES ACCOUNTABLE: INCENTIVIZING A MORE *EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE* SNAP PROGRAM**

**NEED FOR CHANGE:**

**Unlike every other State administered entitlement program, the SNAP benefit is 100 percent funded by the Federal government, resulting in minimal incentive for States to control costs, enhance efficiencies, and improve outcomes for recipients.** Instead, we have seen States discourage work and expand benefits for those the program was not intended to serve.

# General work requirements - for (almost) everyone

If you are age 16–59 and able to work, you will probably need to meet the general work requirements to get SNAP benefits. The general work requirements include registering for work, participating in SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) or workfare if assigned by your state SNAP agency, taking a suitable job if offered, and not voluntarily quitting a job or reducing your work hours below 30 a week without a good reason.

You are excused from the general work requirements if you are any one of these things:

- Already working at least 30 hours a week (or earning wages at least equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours);
- Meeting work requirements for another program (TANF or unemployment compensation);
- Taking care of a child under six or an incapacitated person;
- Unable to work due to a physical or mental limitation;
- Participating regularly in an alcohol or drug treatment program;
- Studying in school or a training program at least half-time (but college students are subject to other eligibility rules).

# Additional work requirements: SNAP's Three-Month Time Limit

- **Many non-disabled adults aged 18 through 64 without children under age 14 need to meet additional requirements to remain eligible for SNAP.**
  - Individuals aged 18 through 64 are limited to three months of SNAP benefits every three years unless they are **working, volunteering, or in a work or training program at least 20 hours a week**.
  - Some individuals are exempt from this work-reporting requirement (also referred to as a time limit):
    - People who are determined to be physically or mentally unfit for work
    - Are pregnant
    - Live with children under age 14 in the household, or
    - Are American Indian or Alaska Native, among others.
    - **(Prior to the Republican megabill enacted in July 2025, only individuals aged 18 to 54 without children in the household were subject to the time limit, and veterans, former foster youth, people experiencing homelessness, and people living with someone under age 18 were exempt.)**

# Imposing SNAP's Time Limit on More Unemployed Adults

| SNAP's failed time limit would newly apply to: | Estimated individuals at risk of **losing SNAP entirely in CA.** | Estimated total people whose **benefits could decrease in CA** |
|---|---|---|
| Older adults without children, ages 55-64 | 201,000 | 243,000 |
| **Ages 18 to 64 with school-age children, no disabilities** | 286,000 | 645,000 |
| Estimated total | **487,000** | **888,000** |

CBO estimates a $92 billion cut.  State level estimates here: https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/expanded-work-requirements-in-house-republican-bill-would-take-away-food

## End of state flexibilities to restrict the harsh time limit

- States can request temporary waivers of the work-reporting requirement in areas with high unemployment.
- Previously, almost all of CA was waived -However, the Republican megabill restricted waivers to areas where unemployment rates exceed 10 percent, so that only a small number of areas continue to qualify for a waiver.

## California Had a Statewide Waiver Through the End of 2026 Under Previous Eligibility Rules


## The Time Limit Returns in 55 Counties in California in November 2025

Time limit waiver remains in place in parts of Congressional Districts 1, 20, 21, 22 and 25

# Restricting Immigrant Eligibility

The proposal would **eliminate SNAP eligibility for certain groups of immigrants**, including **refugees and asylees**.

# Q&A

## Office Hours Session

**The goal for this time is to explore opportunities to build power in this moment through advocacy, documentation of the harm, & engagement.**

# Closing out - the Framework

- **Block** – stop bad things when we can
- **Delay** – delays in executive/legislative action can allow more time for prevail or limiting time harmful policy is in effect
- **Mitigate –** when we can't stop or delay harm, we try to ease its impact
- **Document –** show impact on people to build a case for undoing it later
- **Look for opportunities** – to make progress where possible
- **Continue to lay groundwork** – for future advances

# Why document the harm?

# How to document the harm?

**Use your websites, social media, local media (LTEs + op-eds to keep the pressure on!**

# How to talk about this impact - toplines:

1. Focus first and foremost **on the harm this law will cause by taking away people's health care and food assistance.**
    a. Use stories of individual from your community (with permission/compensation*), alongside the numbers (how many folks are losing benefits, or seeing a benefit reduction)
        *i.* *You can find data here: CalFresh dashboard: https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/california.department.of.social.services/viz/CFdashboard-PUB...*

2. Characterize this law as the **largest cut in history SNAP** and focus on what these cuts actually mean — the human impact and harm to people, raising costs for everyone.

3. Continue to make the juxtaposition between cuts to Medicaid/SNAP/etc. **to help pay for enormous tax cuts for the wealthy.**

# Into the specifics: How to talk about the “cost-shift” and “error rates”

- **Error rates ==== human errors!!! NOT FRAUD.**
  - **Error rates measure administrative mistakes, not criminal activity, not FRAUD**
  - Most “errors” happen when **state systems or workers make technical mistakes**, not because households are trying to cheat.
  - The vast majority of those affected by overpayments **were eligible** for food assistance — they just received the wrong amount.
- **Frame the harm: This isn’t a fix — it’s a cut.**
  - The OBBB proposal **doesn’t fight fraud — it slashes benefits.**
  - This is **not a “cost shift” to states**, it’s a **federal cut** that will force states like California to either:
    - Cut critical services, **or**
    - **Shrink or eliminate SNAP entirely** to make up for the loss — to the tune of **$2 billion**
- **Anchor in values:** We all want programs to run efficiently — but **accountability means improving systems, not punishing families.**
- Real solutions are about **accuracy, access, and dignity** — not cuts. Let’s strengthen SNAP’s integrity **by supporting states**, not setting them up to fail.

# Any impactful media you've seen?

# How to talk about work

- **Always define work requirements as proposals that will take assistance away from people. Avoid referring to these proposals simply as "work requirements."**
- **Focus on the human impact and specific vulnerable groups who will be hurt** by proposals to take assistance away from people who don't meet stricter work requirements, **especially people with disabilities or serious health conditions and children.**
    - **Democrats**: highlight the impact the proposals will have on **single parents and their ability to provide their children** with nutritious meals, if relevant.
    - **Republican and independent voters**: the harm of these proposals to **veterans** is also powerful.
- **Explain how low-income people could be adversely affected by these proposals – even if they DO work or are looking for work – due to other circumstances that make it challenging to meet a work requirement.** And at the same time, think about challenging the false premise that anyone who cannot meet a stricter work requirement doesn't work, and paint a picture of the realities of low-wage work.
    - **Most people who receive help affording food, health care, or housing do work and they could lose needed assistance due to burdensome paperwork, unsteady hours, and/or no sick leave.**
    - **Some have difficulty finding steady, good-paying jobs because they do not have sick leave, they live in areas with unusually high unemployment levels, their employers do not provide them with enough hours, they don't have access to job training, or do not have reliable transportation.**
    - **Some are providing unpaid care to ill, aging, or disabled family members.**
    - Messaging Examples: *Most people who get help affording food, housing, or health coverage DO work. But these proposals will cause many working people to lose the assistance they need to make ends meet because they will struggle to complete burdensome paperwork or because their low-paying jobs typically have unsteady hours and no sick or caregiving leave.*

# .... talking about work

- It is also helpful to **highlight how these proposals may exacerbate racial and other disparities.** For example:
    - *Taking food, health coverage, and housing away from people who cannot meet a harsh work requirement will worsen already wide racial and other disparities in poverty and hunger by punishing people who already face structural barriers due to racism and job discrimination, including people of color, people with disabilities, and women.*
    - *Systemic racism affecting education, employment, housing, and transportation makes people of color more likely to be unemployed or work in jobs with low wages with unsteady or fluctuating hours, no employer-provided health care, little or no sick leave, and unstable housing. Taking away assistance that helps them keep a roof over their heads, afford food, and have health care so they can go to a doctor when they are sick punishes people who are already facing systemic barriers and just makes it harder for them to meet their basic needs.*
- Consider **underscoring that it can be difficult for people to find jobs in the first place**:
    - *In today's economy, it can be difficult for some people to find steady, good-paying jobs to meet a work requirement. This is especially true for those who have health conditions or disabilities, Black and Latino workers, other workers of color, and older people – all of whom face discrimination in the job market – as well as those in rural areas and single parents.*
- S**hift the debate from <u>taking away assistance from low-income people</u> to having Congress do more to <u>ensure the wealthy and big corporations pay their fair share</u>**. And make the contrast between taking away basic essentials from low-income people to pay for huge tax cuts for the wealthy:
    - *These proposals are a ploy by some lawmakers to line the pockets of wealthy people. By taking away food, health care, and housing assistance from people who need help affording the high cost of basic essentials, they can pay for massive tax cuts for wealthy corporations and millionaires and billionaires. Lawmakers shouldn't pay for huge tax cuts for the wealthy by taking food away from children and putting families at risk of homelessness.*
- **Shift the focus to better solutions**. For example, "There are better ways to help people find steady work than taking vital assistance from people who don't meet a harsh work requirement, including providing high-quality job training, childcare, affordable transportation, and a decent minimum wage."

**What messaging on work or fraud has worked? Where have you gotten push back?**

# Other strategies - build for the future!

- **Power-Building Accountability:** Making clear who's to blame for federal fallout and hold state policymakers accountable for bold, progressive responses, drumbeat of harm stories to those policymakers and their constituents;
- ***Laying the Groundwork for Future Advances: proactive policy ideas, narratives, voter education and activation, and policymaker champions to build our power to move more liberatory, bold economic justice visions***

# Consider

- Who is the community you want to reach? - Print out for people who want to write, or
- How can you connect with them authentically?
- What are the barriers?
    - ***Laying the Groundwork for Future Advances: proactive policy ideas, narratives, voter education and activation, and policymaker champions to build our power to move more liberatory, bold economic justice visions***

# + protect SNAP in November

- Due to the ongoing shutdown, the 42M Americans + **5,380,000** California residents, or **14%** of the state population **(1 in 7)** that rely on SNAP are at risk of not receiving the benefits they deserve UNLESS the Trump Administration releases contingency funds.
- **What can you do?**
  - **Lay on the public pressure on social media, through letters to the editors, and by contacting reporters to cover this story:**
    - Here you'll find graphics, template socail media posts, LTE examples and reporter notes: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lU-jSiZlOS-yXcS_8XZuKa93thX-kPuT8jSessA-Siw/edit?pli=1&tab=t.y545wsrngjnk. (thank you to our State Fiscal Policy team for their support!!)
  - **2Contact your members of Congress, and ask them to call on the Trump administration to act!**

# How to talk about work

- **Most SNAP participants who can work do so.** Before the pandemic, among SNAP households with children and at least one working-age, non-disabled adult, three-quarters worked while receiving SNAP, and almost 90 percent worked in the year prior to or the year after receiving SNAP. This reflects that joblessness is often a temporary condition for SNAP participants.
- **SNAP has a harsh 20-hour work rule that cuts unemployed adults off SNAP but does not increase employment.** In general, non-elderly adults without children in their homes can receive benefits for only *three months every three years*, unless they are working at least 20 hours a week or can document they are unable to work. States can temporarily waive this requirement in areas where there are insufficient jobs, and every state has used this option to help unemployed adults put food on the table while they look for work.
- **SNAP's 20-hour work rule doesn't increase employment—but it does take food away from people.** Independent studies have repeatedly shown that SNAP's 20-hour work rule does not increase employment or earnings, but it does cut off people from the benefits they need to afford food. Proposals to expand this requirement to cover families with children and older adults or to limit states' discretion to waive it would worsen this problem and caused millions of people to lose their SNAP benefits. Because the 20-hour work rule significantly increases red tape for states and families, people can lose benefits even if they *are* working if they can't document enough hours, or if they shouldn't be subject to the work rule but were not correctly screened for an exemption by their state.
- **SNAP benefits are modest; they are not large enough to discourage people from working.** Once the emergency allotments end after February, the average SNAP benefit will be about $6.10 per person per day.
- **SNAP supports workers as they increase their earnings.** SNAP's benefit calculation is designed to support work with a 20 percent earned income deduction. This means a participant's benefits decline slowly as their earned income increases, so households almost always remain better off overall as they take higher-paying work. For most

# Resources:

- **9 Principles for Equitable Community Engagement**: This set of principles for equitable community engagement was developed in partnership with State Priorities Partnership groups who participate in Campaigns Day at the 2019 IMPACT Conference.
- 9 Principles for Equitable Community Engagement
- **SFP Campaign Planning Toolkit**: This resource is a perpetual draft that will be updated with input from State Priorities Partnership groups. It outlines key concepts and links to multiple toolkits and resources we have developed and that partner groups have produced.
- **Centering Equity in Coalition Work**: This toolkit highlights choice points on leaderful approaches and behaviors that can help make coalitions more equitable.

# More general talking points on HR1 - use and personalize!

- The deeply harmful Republican megabill will take food assistance away from millions of people already struggling to afford the high cost of food and could cause some states to end their SNAP programs entirely.
- The law's massive, $187 billion SNAP cuts -- the largest in history -- will harm families with children, workers, veterans, seniors, people with disabilities and chronic health conditions, and many others — all to pay partly for huge tax cuts for the wealthy.
- Many parents will lose the help they need to put food on the table for their children, and some children could even lose access to school meals.
- In addition to slashing federal SNAP funding, the law then passes the buck to state governments to make the toughest choices and harshest cuts. Already cash-strapped states will struggle to absorb these massive costs, forcing them to take away food assistance from millions of people. Some states will be forced to end SNAP entirely if they can't come up with the money needed to fill the hole left by deep federal cuts.
- The law will also take food assistance away from millions of parents and grandparents who are working but get tangled up in red tape, have a health condition but fall through the cracks and don't get an exemption from harsh work requirements, or are between jobs and need temporary help. It also strips out the current exemptions from this harsh work requirement for veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and young people who have aged out of foster care, which will put these already vulnerable groups of people at risk of hunger and health complications.
- And, the law takes food assistance away from refugees and others with humanitarian protections, including people granted asylum, certain victims of labor or sex trafficking, and certain survivors of domestic violence — a stark departure from our country's long, bipartisan history of supporting people fleeing violence and persecution.
- This law walks away from the 50-year, bipartisan commitment to ensure that low-income children, adults, and seniors get the help they need to afford food, regardless of where they live.