

March 26, 2025

Chairman Mike Crapo
Senate Committee on Finance
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Ron Wyden
Senate Committee on Finance
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman Brett Guthrie
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Frank Pallone
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman John Boozman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Amy Klobuchar
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman GT Thompson
House Committee on Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Angie Craig
House Committee on Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Crapo, Ranking Member Wyden, Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Boozman, Ranking Member Klobuchar, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Craig:

We, the undersigned 31 national religious organizations urge you to avoid all changes to the Medicaid and SNAP programs that shift costs to states or limit participation as you draft the budget reconciliation bill. We represent a variety of religious denominations that share in one common goal - to serve the poor and the marginalized. Cutting, capping, or changing federal programs such as Medicaid and SNAP to decrease enrollment or place a greater financial burden on states will only decrease access to these programs and increase need. This has direct impacts on our communities and organizations and is an urgent moral issue for the Americans we represent.

The current proposals to reduce Medicaid matching rates, cap Medicaid funding, and limit state directed payments could push states to either cut funding for other programs, or cut Medicaid eligibility, benefits, and/or provider payments. This will ultimately threaten payment rates for health care institutions, nursing homes, and physicians, create higher uncompensated care costs, risk an end to expanded supplemental payment programs, and accelerate the pace of hospital closures. **Our religious organizations have deep ties to the community, and some of the undersigned organizations run hospitals, nursing care facilities, shelters, and retirement communities. These religious institutions will bear a huge financial burden if these proposals for Medicaid go into effect.** There are also current proposals to add work requirements to the Medicaid program. Work requirements lead to coverage losses among people who cannot navigate complex work-reporting and verification systems, people who can't navigate the exemption

process such as older Americans and the disabled community, and people who have been laid off or are otherwise unemployed, often temporarily. **Work requirements cut coverage, and they do not increase employment,¹ leading the Congressional Budget Office to conclude when analyzing a recent proposal that “the employment status of and hours worked by Medicaid recipients would be unchanged.”²**

Changes to the SNAP program, such as rolling back the 2021 update to the Thrifty Food Plan, expanding work requirements, and shifting benefits costs to states will only decrease enrollment and increase hunger, leading to even longer lines at our organizations’ food pantries and soup kitchens. Rolling back the 2021 update would slash SNAP benefits, with each SNAP participant losing an average of \$1.40 per day initially, cutting the daily average benefit to only \$5.00 per person.³ Paperwork and documentation requirements for implementing greater work requirements further increases the risk that significant numbers of people — including those meeting *and* those who should be exempt from the requirements, such as people with disabilities and family caregivers — will lose benefits. Red tape and a lack of assistance in claiming exemptions make it very hard for large numbers of participants to comply, the result being that these policies can’t be fixed by trying to carve out certain populations. It is also unrealistic to assume that if the federal costs of SNAP were shifted to states, most or all would be able to fully pay for the lost federal funds. In a state-federal matching program, federal funding is based on the amount of funding the state spends. But if states either cannot pay the full amount of a required match (or choose not to), they would need to cut the food assistance low-income people and families are receiving in their state. **When the federal government cuts back on its federal programs, it is religious communities doing charity work across the country that shoulder a greater burden.**

Looking beyond the specific proposals to change the Medicaid and SNAP programs in a way that reduces federal costs, we remain concerned as a broad religious coalition surrounding the moral and ethical consequences of the federal government stepping away from the financing of these critical governmental programs. Making changes that reduce federal investment in Medicaid and SNAP sends a message to the millions of Americans that rely on these programs - that this Congress does not care for the wellbeing of normal people trying to make ends meet. It is the ethical and moral obligation of the government to ensure the wellbeing of its citizens. It is an abdication of this moral responsibility when the government seeks to reduce its investment in programs for the poor. Complacency can become greed and selfishness when the funds saved from

¹ Benjamin Sommers *et al.*, “Medicaid Work Requirements In Arkansas: Two-Year Impacts On Coverage, Employment, And Affordability Of Care,” *Health Affairs*, Vol. 39, No. 9, September 2020, <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00538>; Benjamin Sommers *et al.*, “Medicaid Work Requirements — Results from the First Year in Arkansas,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 381, No. 11, June 19, 2019, <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMSr1901772>.

² Phillip Swagel, Letter to Rep. Pallone re: CBO’s Estimate of the Budgetary Effects of Medicaid Work Requirements Under H.R. 2811, the Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023,” Congressional Budget Office, April 26, 2023, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2023-04/59109-Pallone.pdf>.

³ Rep. Angie Craig, “Ranking Member Craig Responds to Republicans’ \$230 Billion SNAP Cut Targets,” February 12, 2025, <https://democrats-agriculture.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2909>.

the Medicaid and SNAP programs are used to ultimately widen the wealth gap between rich and poor. **Researchers from the Yale Budget Lab found that if Congress implemented a budget reconciliation bill following the numbers in the House Budget Resolution, the lowest-income taxpayers would see a loss of \$1,125 annually, factoring in their tax rate and the lost value from leaner federal benefit programs. The richest 0.1 percent of taxpayers would see a more than \$180,000 benefit from lower tax rates and would not be affected by the benefit reductions.**⁴

Budgets are moral documents that outline a nation’s priorities. **Our faith traditions are united in our belief that our government has a moral obligation to support the most vulnerable in our communities. Critical programs like Medicaid and federal nutrition assistance protect and support those in dire need. We urge your committees to only accept proposals that fulfill this just goal, particularly at a time when costs are rising, and individuals and families are depending on you.**

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists

American Friends Service Committee

Aytzim: Ecological Judaism

Bread for the World

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

Church World Service

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF)

Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action

Faith in Public Life

Franciscan Action Network

Friends Committee on National Legislation

⁴ Harris Eppsteiner, John Ricco, “Illustrative Distributional Effects of Policies Consistent with the House Concurrent Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2025,” Yale Budget Lab, March 2025, [Illustrative Distributional Effects of Policies Consistent with the House Concurrent Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2025 | The Budget Lab at Yale](#)

Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Council of Churches

National Council of Jewish Women

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Pax Christi USA

Presbyterian Church USA

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team

Sojourners/SojoAction

The Shalom Center

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

Union for Reform Judaism

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

United Church of Christ