

US Senator Maria Cantwell

Floor Speech on SNAP

November 4th, 2025

[\[VIDEO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues here on the floor tonight to talk about the importance of SNAP benefits. And I think you can see that what we don't need is more chaos. And we certainly don't need less help.

What we need is for our colleagues on the other side of the aisle and the White House to help us with SNAP.

Now, my newspapers have been very clear. The Spokesman-Review: "SNAP benefits remain in limbo."

The Seattle Times: "State SNAP recipients brace for lower benefits after partial funding."

The President of the United States, as my colleagues have said, has been ordered by the courts to pay for SNAP benefits, but instead of doing that, wants to continue to make life harder on not just Washingtonians, but many people across the country. Nearly 1 million Washingtonians receive SNAP benefits.

We're talking about benefits that are helping them make ends meet. And as we've seen from food banks since the COVID days till now, not everybody can find food without paying exorbitant costs. So, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [was] created to try to help those Washingtonians and other people feed their families and feed their children.

More than 38% of SNAP participants are families with members who are older adults or disabled. Nearly 10% of Washington households are food insecure -- meaning they don't have the necessary access to have adequate food because they simply can't afford it.

So, we're here tonight to talk about how we want to save SNAP. SNAP benefits, as we know, help with the average household receiving benefits, or about \$5.92 a day. Yes, that means that the fourth most expensive state to buy groceries in the US, and that the average cost of weekly groceries in the state of Washington is \$287-- over \$1,000 per month.

So, we know that the SNAP benefit program helps us. So, we know this administration likes to go from crisis to crisis, but grocery prices have been rising because of the Trump tariffs. And now, because the fact that our Republican colleagues will not work with us to open the government, those families who rely on SNAP are having a big challenge.

We know that what we need to do is put SNAP dollars back into our economy. Every dollar spent on SNAP generates \$1.54 of economic activity. In the four years leading up to the COVID pandemic, SNAP lifted 154,000 Washingtonians out of poverty, including 77,000 children.

My office released data yesterday showing where halting SNAP would cause the most damage. People in Yakima County, where more than 57,000 people, 21% of the county's residents, receive SNAP benefits. In King County, that's where Seattle is, nearly 200,000 people will lose benefits.

So let's be clear: the administration could fully fund SNAP benefits, do as the courts have asked. But for some reason, it's better to deny these people the benefits they deserve. I don't understand.

We know what the courts have said, one in Massachusetts, one in Rhode Island. It said the administration should use the available emergency funding to fulfill SNAP benefits to 42 million Americans. That's what the courts have said. So the economic hardship that is being put on these American families at the hands of this administration is unconscionable.

Why would the President freeze a program that not only stimulates the economy, helps fight hunger, feeds families, counteracts the tariff costs, and do what the courts is telling them to do? I don't understand why the American people, particularly families at lower income, are some sort of bargaining chip here in the United States Senate. I thought we were here to solve problems. I thought we were here to help the American people.

Yakima County, as I mentioned, one of the most hard-hit SNAP counties, is really [demonstrating] a failure to extend the premium tax credits that help keep insurance affordable. Data from the exchange also showed that the people in this particular county expect a 133% increase in health insurance premiums for those county residents.

So here we are, the most hard-hit SNAP county in our state, and also now [statewide] facing a whopping \$1,049 per month increase in their premiums. How do my colleagues expect people in Washington to survive with out-of-control health insurance costs, out of control food [] costs, and especially as inflation rose to 3% in September.

So instead of coming to the table on meaningful negotiations, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are still refusing to address the high costs of food and the high costs of health care. We're here tonight to say it's easy to save SNAP. The President could just do it.

But let's work together to lower these extraordinary costs of health care on American families, to help a food program that has helped our farm communities, and certainly helped families. Let's do the right thing and help save the SNAP program.

I thank my colleagues and I yield the floor.