

# [***Backlash Over Push to Change SNAP Benefits Shocks Republican***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C2X-2611-DY68-13Y9-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Lawmakers are shocked and outraged as Congress prepares to address the future of SNAP in this year's Farm Bill.

**Body**

The chair of the House Committee on Agriculture, which oversees the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), is "shocked" at the backlash he's faced after proposing changes to the program.

As committee chair, [*Republican*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republican?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) Representative Glenn "GT" Thompson of Pennsylvania will lead the lower chamber's efforts in drafting a new Farm Bill, a comprehensive spending package passed every five to six years that directs U.S. food and agriculture policy. Markup of the House draft of that bill is scheduled for Thursday.

In Thompson's draft, the cost of SNAP would be reduced by $30 billion over 10 years by preventing the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) from updating the cost of Thrifty Food Plan—outside of adjustments for inflation—which determines how much money will be doled out through SNAP.

Opponents of the changes say this amounts to a cut that will prevent hungry families from affording the essentials for a healthy diet, arguing the new USDA restrictions would prevent SNAP from accounting for shifting eating habits and developments in nutrition science.

"They're being disingenuous, they're being misleading, and maybe some of them— there are some I think that started this—that are perhaps lying for political purposes, which is really shocking when it comes to the Agriculture Committee," Thompson told *Newsweek*.

Thompson views the changes as a cost reduction measure and rejects his proposal being framed as cuts: "There'll be no cuts to individual or family benefits," he said, emphasizing that his proposal considers changes in the future cost of living and believes it provides an important check on the USDA.

Democratic Senator Debbie Stabenow of Michigan, chair of the [*Senate*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/senate?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, rejects the idea of trimming spending through making changes to SNAP.

If the budget results in SNAP receiving $30 billion less, she says, it amounts to a cut that the "seniors and families" who participate in the program will feel.

"The average person that's getting some help from us as Americans is getting $6.00 a day, and [House Republicans] are trying to say that if they eliminate a small increase, that amounts to about $1.50 a week, that's not a big deal," Stabenow told *Newsweek*. "If you only have six dollars of food, that's a big deal."

The American diet and what constitutes healthy eating has changed from decade to decade as new scientific information has become available. Stabenow said the ***politics*** that surround nutrition are complicated and that disagreements in this area have played a role in shaping the House Agriculture Committee's proposal.

The Thrifty Food Plan was [*updated in 2021*](https://www.newsweek.com/snap-benefits-warning-amid-fears-cuts-1901813?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) for the first time in decades to factor in real purchasing power. This came on the heels of a directive outlined in the 2018 Farm Bill that directed the USDA to reevaluate the plan, which was developed in the 1960s. This resulted in SNAP recipients receiving an extra $36 per month.

[*According to the USDA*](https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/key-statistics-and-research/#:~:text=The%20Supplemental%20Nutrition%20Assistance%20Program,fiscal%20year%20(FY)%202022.&text=Download%20chart%20data%20in%20Excel,41.2%20million%20participants%20per%20month.), an average of 41.2 million Americans participated in SNAP each month, with the program supplying $230.88 per participant monthly, as of FY 2022. That year, Federal SNAP spending totaled $119.5 billion, and the program accounted for 65 percent of USDA nutrition assistance spending.

Thompson believes the disagreements over SNAP will be addressed when the House and Senate eventually meet to discuss the bill and said his "friend" Stabenow "needs to be focused on the Senate and spend less time talking about the House."

Stabenow views the GOP proposal as hypocritical, questioning how [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) can propose curtailing SNAP during a time in which conservatives have been outspoken about their frustrations over the price of food. She stood firm in her opposition to the House GOP plan, saying, "they will not get the votes to fund the Farm Bill."

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2396370/snap-benefits-change-backlash.jpg)

**Graphic**

SNAP Benefits Change Backlash

Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images

People shop for food in a Brooklyn neighborhood that has a large immigrant and elderly population on October 16, 2023 in New York City. The upcoming Farm Bill will play a significant role in determining the future of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

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