

Trump administration threatens further cuts to food benefits

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In an appearance on Fox News last week, Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins said a benefit of the longest shutdown in US history was that it provided Republicans an opportunity to “completely deconstruct” the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP is the largest federal anti-hunger program in the United States, used by some 42 million people, including 16 million children.

During the shutdown, the Trump administration halted funding for SNAP for the first time in the program’s history. Even though the shutdown has ended, there are still many states that have not issued payments due to technical or budget issues related to funding. The Food Research & Action Center found that while many states were going to begin issuing payments starting on November 14, others, such as Illinois, did not resume until November 20. Other states, such as Florida, have not issued full payments, only noting that benefits will be “reduced in accordance with federal guidelines.”

Though benefit payments have started to resume, millions will soon find themselves permanently removed from SNAP eligibility because of a tightening of requirements. In July, Congress passed new funding provisions for the program, which would cut about \$186 billion in federal funding, while at the same time adding new work requirement stipulations and record keeping aimed at pushing otherwise eligible people off the program.

In line with this objective, Secretary Rollins opined during the shutdown that she would require all SNAP recipients to reapply in an attempt to whittle even more people from SNAP. However, due to a backlash, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) has temporarily shelved that proposal.

According to the most recent statistics from 2023, 47.4 million Americans lived in food-insecure households, which is defined by the US Department of Health as a “household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.” This number is an increase of over 30 million since 2020, when there were 13.8 million households that were food-insecure.

There are no recent statistics because of the shutdown of the federal government, as well as the fact that the USDA has stopped issuing yearly Household Food Security Reports. However, according to the Purdue University Center for Food Demand Analysis and Sustainability (CFDAS), their 3-month moving average of the number of Americans suffering from food insecurity was 13.7 percent in September, a number significantly higher than that of previous periods. This indicates that the explosive growth in food insecurity since the onset of the pandemic is on the rise again after dropping throughout 2024.

According to CFDAS, this rise in food insecurity is the result of high food prices, which have remained persistently higher than pre-pandemic levels.

In addition to rising hunger, corporations are laying off more workers while hiring at lower rates. The September employment report, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), which was ostensibly held back for seven weeks by the government shutdown, continues to show little to no job growth, rising unemployment rates, slowing wage rises and significant job losses in key productive sectors, such as manufacturing, warehousing and logistics.

Last month, US-based employers reported 153,074 job cuts, a rise of 175 percent from October 2024. There have been over 1 million layoffs so far this year, the most since the pandemic year of 2020 and a 65

percent increase over last year. The layoffs are across industries as major companies use advances in artificial intelligence to eliminate entire professions. Amazon, UPS and Paramount Global have announced plans to lay off at least 50,000 jobs before the end of the year.

As workers and their families find it increasingly impossible to survive, the rapacious, opulent, luxurious lifestyles of the modern day capitalist aristocracy proceeds uninterrupted at the other pole of society. The technology sector, which is also one of the leaders in the job bloodbath, has seen a year over year increase in its net profit margin of 27.7 percent and an increase of 2.6 percent over the previous year's increase. Only four firms, Nvidia, Apple, Microsoft and Alphabet, account for more than \$15 trillion in global market value.

Overall, US corporate profits increased by 4 percent year over year in the second quarter of 2025. So far in 2025, the growth of wealth by global billionaires has increased by \$1.9 trillion, bringing the total wealth of the world's billionaires to an obscene \$16.1 trillion, a figure larger than the Gross Domestic Product of every nation save the US and China.

It is not just food insecurity which is on the rise amongst US workers. Homelessness reached an all-time high in January 2024 with over 771,000 people without a roof over their heads on a single night that month. This was an 18 percent increase over the previous year and the highest number since records began being kept. The number includes an increase in every demographic group, with adults over 55 and children seeing a significant escalation in their numbers.

The explosion of homelessness within the American working class is a direct result of the current restructuring of US industry, which is seeing a jobs bloodbath in every industry, coupled with an exorbitant increase in rents since the pandemic.

As of 2023, 22.6 million renter households (which is almost 50 percent of the total) were cost-burdened, which is defined as paying more than 30 percent of their income towards rent. According to the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS), 22.6 million is an all-time high. While the "percentage of middle-income renters (earning \$30,000–\$44,999) with cost burdens increased by 1.9 percentage points in just one year, reaching 70% in 2023."

While it has not released statistics for 2024 or 2025,

the JCHS has stated that the data that they have acquired demonstrate that the numbers are increasing or stabilizing rather than decreasing.

The jump in cost-burdened renters is only set to rise more given that the latest numbers on the housing market showing a sharp rise of 6 percent in foreclosure starts (the initiation of the process) for October, with completed foreclosures up 32 percent over last year.

And while the housing market is increasingly out of reach for ordinary workers due to high interest rates, not so for the wealthy, where a large majority of houses are purchased in cash, negating the need for high interest mortgage rates. While the market for working class is contracting and foreclosures are increasing, the market for the rich continues to see strong demand and increasing prices.

There are two Americas: One is made up of the overwhelming majority of the population, which has seen its standard of living continually decline over the course of decades, and the other is made up of a tiny minority that wallows in isolated luxury that increases on a daily basis.

During the shutdown, members of the military and the police state apparatus, along with the capitalist politicians, continued to collect a paycheck. Meanwhile, 1.4 million other government workers, including air traffic controllers, were either forced to work without pay or were furloughed for the duration, causing misery and hardship.

There is only one answer to end this state of affairs, and that is for the working class to organize itself independently of the two parties of big business and those in their orbit. Workers need to create independent organs of democratic power in rank-and-file committees in every workplace, school and neighborhood. These organizations need to be linked with the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) and begin making preparations now for a general strike, which will profoundly change the relationship of forces.



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