

Dear Members of Congress,

As organizations that support access to public benefit programs, we write to you in opposition to the disturbing and misleading attacks on basic needs programs and the communities accessing these programs. In recent months, lies about the integrity of child care funding, Medicaid, SNAP, and other programs have been used to justify disruptions and cuts in Congressionally-appropriated funding, fuel attacks against service providers, weaken public benefits programs, and justify sweeping, violent and costly immigration enforcement.

Congress should not engage in dishonest policymaking regarding anti-poverty programs, providers and caregivers that deliver essential services, and immigrants, their families, or the communities they live in. Instead, we ask Congress to properly steward taxpayer dollars by investing in essential basic needs like health care, food, housing, child care, and education for families and individuals.

Congress Should Focus on the Real Fraudsters

Historically, narratives around fraud in public benefit programs have been used to justify cuts, impose restrictive policies, and fuel public skepticism toward basic needs programs. These claims frequently lack evidence and divert attention from the real sources of waste and abuse.

Government oversight agencies have long documented that abuse of government programs largely comes from unscrupulous contractors and powerful individuals. One [investigation](#) found hundreds of millionaires who have not paid billions of dollars in taxes yet faced little to no consequences. Defense contracting fraud totals [hundreds of millions of dollars](#) stolen annually, with one wealthy company paying out \$1.5 million to settle fraud allegations [in early January](#).

Fraud in basic needs programs is not common. The administration's narrative on individuals defrauding programs conflates [error rates with fraud](#). Human errors, like missing or insufficient information, will always be present, but they are not deliberate or as costly as the calculated and deliberate attempts from contractors and companies who actively defraud the government.

New Barriers for Public Benefits Hurt Individuals and States

Instead of strengthening oversight of and accountability from corporations and powerful actors, some policymakers are focusing on adding new barriers to support for individuals with low incomes to access programs that help them meet basic needs and

pushing costs onto budget-strapped states. Yet across America, people's affordability needs are only growing.

- Child care and health care are deeply unaffordable. Nearly half of families [say](#) they struggle with health care costs. The average family [needs](#) a salary of \$180,000 to afford infant care.
- The costs of long-term care, both institutional settings and home and community-based services, for older adults and people with disabilities continue to climb. Most families cannot afford the high cost of long-term care, resulting in [two-thirds of caregiving hours](#) being provided unpaid, often by family members who reduce their own incomes and take time out of the workforce to do so.
- The costs of groceries also [continue to rise](#), leaving many families unable to put meals on their tables.
- Every state in the nation continues to deal with the [ongoing shortage of affordable housing](#). There is not a community in the U.S. where a single parent working 40 hours a week and earning minimum wage can [afford](#) a two-bedroom fair-market rental home.

In the name of supposedly fighting fraud, the administration is freezing funds, implementing time limits on support, and adding work requirements and burdensome paperwork for basic needs programs, including child care, [rental assistance](#), and Medicaid. These new barriers will only harm families and individuals already struggling to make ends meet.

The massive cuts to Medicaid and SNAP from last year's reconciliation legislation have already begun to have impacts on state budgets and will limit millions of eligible people from accessing health care and food assistance, with many already losing access to SNAP this year. These attacks on federal programs also increase administrative burdens for states, who are already having to deal with increased bureaucracy and costs due to H.R.1. State and local programs and offices are already severely under-resourced and understaffed—burdening them with additional rules or barriers is not only duplicative, it is also wasteful and inefficient.

Instead of passing legislation to reverse the damage caused by budget reconciliation or the affordability crisis so many are struggling with, Congress is instead considering legislation that, in the name of addressing fraud, will make basic needs, like child care or food assistance, more complicated and expensive. Penalizing states by withholding federal funds or freezing access to necessary services and supports, and increasing administrative paperwork *won't* prevent fraud, but it *will* prevent countless individuals, children and families, older adults, and people with disabilities and complex medical

needs from accessing critical care, food assistance, and other public benefits that meet their basic needs.

Immigrants are Being Scapegoated with False Allegations of Fraud

Federal health and social services programs already have strict eligibility and verification processes, and many taxpaying immigrants, documented and lawfully present, [are banned](#). However, the administration has used unverified fraud allegations to [justify](#) its violent immigration enforcement actions in Minnesota, turning child care programs into focal points for ICE operations and public harassment. This began with claims of fraud in child care programs, but predictably the administration has continued to use immigrants as scapegoats to attack any and all basic needs programs. The Trump administration has used the guise of “[exploiting public housing resources](#)” to seek to separate families and require burdensome paperwork for tenants, including older adults and U.S. citizens, living in federally subsidized housing.

Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, offenses involving fraud or deceit already commonly trigger deportation proceedings or ineligibility for legalization. That is in addition to the government’s broad authority to prosecute fraud under federal criminal law. Given the serious consequences for noncitizens who commit fraud and data that show that noncitizens are [less likely](#) to be convicted of fraud than citizens, punitive actions against immigrants are unjustified and do nothing to resolve the real problems everyday Americans face.

Conclusion

There are proven ways for the government to ensure recipients of federal funds are good stewards of taxpayer dollars. Yet the administration has [cut funding](#) for IRS enforcement, [provided clemency](#) to those convicted of government fraud, and [fired](#) the inspectors general responsible for overseeing government accountability. We write to urge that you work to strengthen federal public benefit programs and reject attempts to cut access to basic needs and harm immigrant communities.

We ask Congress to:

- Oppose unjustified funding freezes for programs like the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Medicaid and support efforts to require the administration to share details about information they are requesting from states and localities.
- Oppose legislation that requires burdensome reporting, adds new fiscal penalties for states, restricts eligibility for public benefit program funding, and ties federal agencies’ hands to prioritize families’ access to basic needs like child care, health care, food assistance, and housing.

- Oppose duplicative and misleading legislation, such as the Deporting Fraudsters Act of 2025, that seek to blame immigrant families for our country's problems.
- Support restoring the funding, integrity, and authority of independent watchdog agencies.
- Speak out against efforts from the administration and policymakers that weaken public benefit programs in the name of fraud.

We call on Congress to stand firm against these attacks on basic needs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
 Caring Across Generations
 Center for Law and Social Policy
 Child Care for Every Family Network
 Child Welfare League of America
 Coalition on Human Needs
 Community Catalyst
 Friends Committee on National Legislation
 Justice in Aging
 National Health Law Program
 National Immigration Law Center
 National Low Income Housing Coalition
 National Women's Law Center Action Fund

National Organizations

Alianza Americas
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
 Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
 Autistic People of Color Fund
 Autistic Self Advocacy Network
 Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
 Center for the Study of Social Policy
 Children's HealthWatch
 Church World Service
 Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Region
 Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
 Family Centered Treatment Foundation
 First Focus on Children
 Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC)
 International Refugee Assistance Project

Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
Link Health
Mary T. Associates
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
MomsRising
NAACP
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Social Workers
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Center for Children in Poverty
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Homelessness Law Center
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice
National Nurses United
National Partnership for New Americans
National Respite Coalition
People Power United
Positive Women's Network-USA
SEIU
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Poverty Law Center
Stop AAPI Hate
The National Partnership for Women and Families
The Workers Circle
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
USAHello

State Organizations

ACCESS REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE (California)
AIDS Foundation Chicago
Alliance for Quality Education (New York)
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation (Minnesota)
AP-OD
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California (AJSOCAL)
Asian Counseling and Referral Service (Washington)
Autism Society of Minnesota

Ayuda (D.C., Maryland, Virginia)
Binational Institute of Human Development (Illinois)
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
Care 4 the Caregivers (Arizona)
Child Care Law Center (California)
Children First (Pennsylvania)
Children Now (California)
Children's Action Alliance (Arizona)
Children's Defense Fund-Texas
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) (California)
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
Common Good Iowa
Community Health Partnership (California)
Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. (Delaware)
Disability Rights California
Disability Rights Center - NH
Disability Rights Florida
Disability Rights New Jersey
Disability Rights North Carolina
Disability Rights Washington
East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (California)
El Centro Inc (Kansas)
El Pueblo Unido AC (New Jersey)
Empower Missouri
End Child Poverty California
Equality California
Every Texan
First 5 Association of California
Florida Policy Institute
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project (Arizona)
Food for People (California)
For All Families Oregon
FreshQue Foundation (Texas)
Greater Boston Legal Services
Hawai'i Children's Action Network
Health Access MN
Health Care for All MN
Housing Action Illinois

Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative (Texas)
IAJE (Mississippi)
Idaho Head Start Association
Illinois Action for Children
Illinois Head Start Association
Illinois Partners for Human Service
Indiana Justice Project
Iowa ACEs 360
Legal Council for Health Justice (Illinois)
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Miami Valley Immigration Coalition (Ohio)
Michigan Coalition on Black Civic Participation
Michigan League for Public Policy
Michigan Poverty Law Program
Michigan's Children
Minnesota Budget Project
Minnesota Consortium of Community Developers
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
Minnesota Disability Law Center
Minnesota Social Service Association
Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative
NAMI Minnesota
National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter
New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice
New Jersey Citizen Action
NM Center on Law and Poverty
North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project
Nourish California
Oakland Forward (Michigan)
Ohio Immigrant Alliance
Our Children Oregon
Our Own Wall Street (Michigan)
Pathways LA (California)
PEACH (California)
Praxis Health Empowerment (California)
Reach for Resources (Minnesota)
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN) (California)
Silver State Equality (Nevada)
South Dakota Voices for Peace

SPACEs In Action (Washington, D.C.)
Tennessee Justice Center
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors
Texas Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
The Arc Minnesota
The Children's Partnership (California)
The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health
Tubman (Minnesota)
Utahns Against Hunger
Virginia Organizing
Voices for Racial Justice (Minnesota)
Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP
Western Center on Law & Poverty (California)
WeCount! (Florida)
We, the Village Coalition (Illinois)
William E. Morris Institute for Justice (Arizona)