



**Testimony of Kristen Kinchla, Maine Children's Alliance
In Support of LD 2122, An Act to Prevent Negative Impacts from Federal
Funding Changes to and Fund Eligibility Determinations and Outreach for the
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am Kristen Kinchla, Research Associate at the Maine Children's Alliance, a statewide, non-partisan advocacy organization whose mission is to promote sound public policies to improve the lives of Maine children, youth, and families.

I am testifying on behalf of the Maine Children's Alliance, and as a member of Hunger Free Maine, a coalition formed to advocate for policies to advance Maine's Roadmap to End Hunger, in support of LD 2122, An Act to Prevent Negative Impacts from Federal Funding Changes to and Fund Eligibility Determinations and Outreach for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

By establishing the programs and funds outlined in this bill, Maine has an opportunity to respond to the crisis created by the federal passage of H.R. 1 and mitigate harm for many Maine children and families whose health and well-being are at risk without swift, robust action by state leaders.

Recently, MCA created a [data dashboard](#) to help illustrate the impacts of H.R. 1 for communities across Maine. This interactive platform doesn't just present numbers — it tells a story about real people, real families, and real consequences for our state's future. It shows, in concrete terms, what federal funding changes could mean for communities everywhere across Maine.

These are some of the high-level impacts on the state by 2034:

- **\$3.9 billion** in total Medicaid and SNAP funding lost

- **444% increase** in SNAP-related costs— from \$13.8M (pre-H.R. 1) to \$75.3M (post-H.R. 1)
- **\$1.3 billion to \$1.6 billion** lost in economic development
- **34,000 Mainers** expected to lose Medicaid coverage
- **101,000 households** expected to lose SNAP benefits
- **55,000 households** in Maine relying on both Medicaid & SNAP

What we know already should give us pause. Maine has the 10th-highest rate of childhood food insecurity nationally and the highest in New England. More than one in five children—20.6%, or approximately 50,610 Maine kids— experienced food insecurity in 2023.

Lawmakers must take bold action now to blunt the most serious harm. Acting early allows us to prevent deeper harm, target resources where they are most needed, and avoid the far greater costs of crisis management later.

Medicaid and SNAP are often misunderstood as programs “only for others.” In Maine, they are economic stabilizers: supporting local economies, helping families stay healthy and productive, and reducing long-term costs by preventing crises before they happen. When these programs are cut, the damage doesn’t stop with individual recipients - it ripples out to hospitals, local businesses, schools, and the overall economic fabric of our towns.

That’s why what we do now matters. The federal changes enacted in H.R. 1 are no longer theoretical — they are already unfolding. The question is not whether Maine will feel the impact, but how deeply we will feel it. And that depends on the actions we take today.

Robust public programs that support health and nutrition aren’t charity; they’re smart, practical public policy that strengthens economic stability, public health, and community resilience. When they are weakened, predictable consequences follow.

Hospitals and clinics face higher uncompensated care costs when people lose coverage. Food insecurity rises, leading to poorer health and educational outcomes

for children. Rural communities, where SNAP dollars circulate through local grocery stores, experience economic contraction. Emergency rooms, shelters, and crisis services experience greater strain. And taxpayers ultimately pay more when preventable problems escalate into emergencies or chronic challenges.

Maine has one of the oldest populations in the country, significant challenges in rural health care access, and many counties where Medicaid and SNAP are critical pillars of household stability. Rural communities will be hit especially hard due to fewer hospitals and providers, fewer grocers, and fragile local economies.

We must have an honest conversation about how to pay for the services that keep our communities healthy and economies strong. Federal support is becoming less reliable; leaders of both parties should consider a full range of responsible options, including new revenue and the prudent and appropriate use of reserve funds, such as the Budget Stabilization Fund, to protect the well-being of Maine people and the state's long-term stability. The question before Maine's leaders is not whether these federal cuts will hurt our communities, but whether we will choose to prepare for them.

Advancing policy proposals like this one should be essential for consideration this session, as should the thoughtful revenue measures that could and should fund them.

We urge you to support this legislation and to consider all the options on the table to ensure robust funding for proposals like this one that protect the health and well-being of children and families across Maine.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to Maine's children and families.

Kristen Kinchla, Maine Children's Alliance

kkinchla@mekids.org



MCA Dashboard



Senate Districts



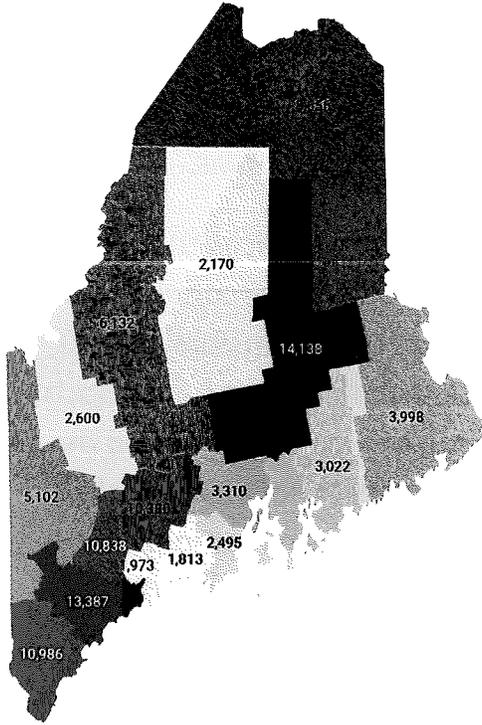
House Districts

H.R. 1 SNAP Cuts by Households

101,000 Maine households are expected to lose some or all of their SNAP benefits by 2034. Average SNAP benefits for Maine's families are projected to decrease by \$122 per month, which equates to the loss of 32 meals per month, based on Maine's average meal cost.

Number of households expected to lose SNAP benefits

1,813 14,138



Scale mid-point represents roughly the 50th percentile of county-level data

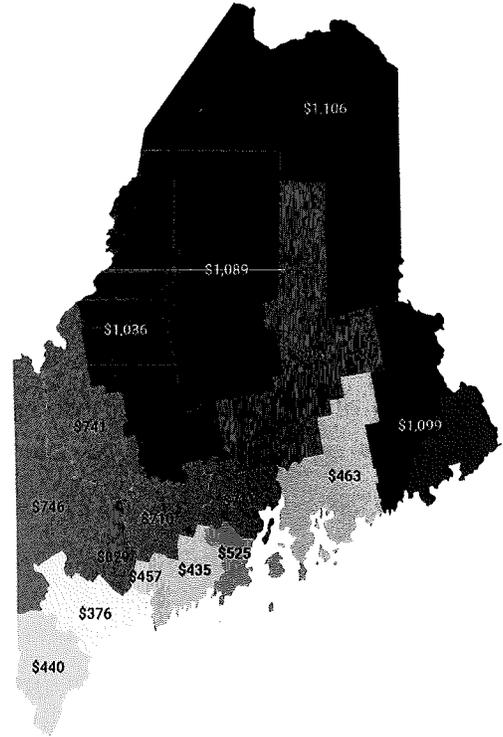
Map: Maine Children's Alliance • Source: This map assumes 101,000 households in Maine will lose some or all of their SNAP benefits by 2034, according to The Urban Institute's respective calculations, proportional distribution of funding losses calculated with American Community Survey 2019-2023 data. The average cost of a meal was \$3.76 in 2023 per Feeding America. • Created with Datawrapper

H.R. 1 SNAP Cuts Per Capita

Maine is expected to lose \$868 million in SNAP funding by 2034. The estimated range of economic development losses is between \$1.3 billion and \$1.6 billion. There will also be a 444% increase in the SNAP state budget share, from \$13.8M (pre-H.R. 1) to \$75.3M (post-H.R. 1).

Total SNAP funding loss per capita

\$376 \$1,106



Scale mid-point represents roughly the 50th percentile of county-level data

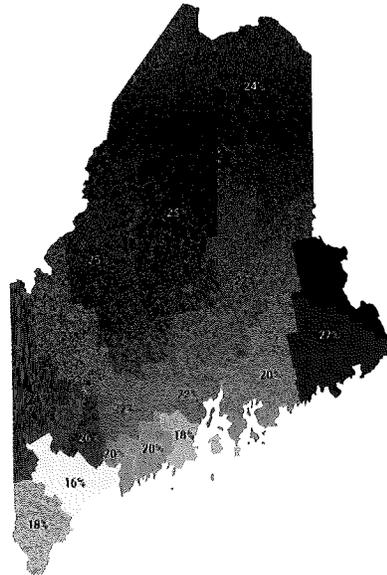
Map: Maine Children's Alliance • Source: This map assumes roughly \$868 million in national SNAP cuts by 2034 according to the Congressional Budget Office. Proportional distribution of funding losses were calculated with American Community Survey 2019-2023 data. This map assumes 101,000 households will lose some or all SNAP benefits by 2034, according to The Urban Institute's respective calculations. Proportional distribution of benefit losses were calculated with American Community Survey 2019-2023 data. • Created with Datawrapper

Childhood Food Insecurity Rates

More than 1 in 5 (20.6%), or 50,610 Maine children, experienced food insecurity in 2023. Of those, 64% were (incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty level) for federal nutrition programs and 36% were likely ineligible for federal nutrition programs (incomes above 185% of the poverty level).

Percent of children experiencing food insecurity

15.8% 27.3%



Food insecurity occurs when a household cannot access enough food due to a lack of money and other essential resources. It is often linked to several factors that lead to food insecurity, creating a cycle that can be hard to break. These factors can be related to household income, expenses, access to affordable health care, the surrounding social and physical environment, and barriers to opportunities which play a role in preventing some households and communities from being food secure.