

Opposing the Federal Administration’s Attempt to Exacerbate Food Insecurity

On October 3, 2019, the Federal Administration issued a proposed change to the Supplemental Assistance Program (SNAP). This is the Federal Administration’s third such proposal this year—continuing its assault of safety net programs across the country that millions of people rely on to prevent hunger, homelessness, or basic needs deprivation. This proposal alone is estimated to result in cuts to food assistance levels issued to SNAP recipient households by \$4.5 billion over a five-year period.

SNAP, a federally-funded program, provides anti-hunger benefits to eligible participants. In California, SNAP is referred to as CalFresh and is administered through the California Department of Social Services. In Los Angeles County, approximately 1.1 million residents, including over half a million children, rely on CalFresh for basic nutrition assistance. The program is critical to addressing food insecurity in Los Angeles County.

This most recent proposed rule change would alter how states calculate their standard utility allowance (SUA) deduction. Deductions play an important role in the SNAP program by taking into account that not all of a household’s income is available for purchasing food because some income must be used to meet other household needs, such as utility expenses. The Regularity Impact Analysis estimates that 25% of California’s SNAP recipient households will have a reduced benefit as a result of this proposed rule change. This, while countless research has demonstrated that SNAP

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benefits are already not enough to afford healthy, adequate food for the month.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Department of Public Social Services to submit a comprehensive comment opposing the proposed rule to be submitted during the public comment period;
2. Direct the Chief Executive Office (CEO), in consultation with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), to send a five-signature letter to the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation to declare Los Angeles County's opposition to the proposed rule and express the harm that it would cause to residents; and
3. Instruct County Counsel to analyze the proposed rule and monitor any legal action aimed at challenging the proposed rule from taking effect, and present recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to file and/or join as amicus or plaintiff in litigation, as deemed appropriate by County Counsel.

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HLS:ew