

Federal Farm Bill Would Cut Food for Children

Written by Wisconsin Senate, Kate Constalie
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Thousands of WI children to lose food assistance under House GOP Farm Bill

MADISON – After prioritizing massive tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy, House Republicans are now proposing widespread cuts to food assistance programs that will impact thousands of children.

Wisconsin families stand to lose \$23.8 million annually as an estimated 23,369 children would become ineligible for need-based food assistance. Children in rural and conservative-leaning communities would be hit hardest by these cuts.



“It’s bad enough Republicans fought to give millionaires another tax break,” said Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse). “But then to turn around and deny low-income children access to food. It’s unthinkable. How can Republican politicians justify these horribly misplaced priorities that favor the wealthy at the expense of vulnerable children?”

According to [a new report](#) by the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau, the 2018 House Farm Bill (H.R. 2) would prevent states like Wisconsin from offering broad-based categorical eligibility to families that do not receive cash assistance or ongoing TANF-funded services. This change is estimated to result in 8 percent of currently-enrolled children losing eligibility for FoodShare assistance as well as free and reduced school lunch support.

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“The message Republicans are sending to hungry, low-income children is as clear as it is callous,” added Shilling. “A ‘Let them eat cake’ mentality is no way to approach the serious issue of childhood hunger and widespread food insecurity that millions of families across our country struggle with on a daily basis. With a little compassion and commonsense, I hope we can protect children and put the needs of Wisconsin’s working families ahead of wealthy special interests.”

The federal farm bill, which has traditionally benefited from bipartisan support, has become more polarized in recent years as House Republicans seek to limit access to food assistance. H.R. 2 was passed out of committee by Republicans and is expected to be debated on the House floor early this month.

An interactive map of Wisconsin with county-based eligibility statistics is [available here](#).