



How the Republican Budget Would Hurt Virginia

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House Republicans recently passed a [budget resolution](#) that calls for 4.5 trillion dollars in tax cuts over the next decade, favoring the richest five percent of Americans. To pay for all this, Republicans plan to [cut spending](#) by two trillion dollars and increase the debt by more than two trillion. Because Republicans want more defense spending and are unwilling to touch Social Security and Medicare, spending cuts will fall heavily on Americans with lower incomes.

The [biggest targets](#) are Medicaid (and the related Children's Health Insurance Program), tax credits to help individuals buy Affordable Care Act marketplace insurance, and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps). The Earned Income Tax Credit, Supplemental Security Income, and subsidized school meals are also in danger. Cuts to these programs would cause serious harm in every state, including Virginia.

Many Virginians Rely on These Programs

Even with these programs, almost 900,000 Virginians lived below the official [poverty](#) line in 2024, and [eviction filings](#) are unusually high compared to other states. One in ten Virginian households is [food insecure](#). Without government's help, these problems would be much worse.



Medicaid/CHIP
2,001,336
Enrolled in '24



ACA Marketplace Insurance Plans
(Affordable Care Act)
400,058
Covered in '24



SNAP
(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
834,932
Beneficiaries in '24



Subsidized School Meals
749,881
Eligible students in '24



WIC Food Program
(Women, Infants, and Children)
106,992
Food program users in '24



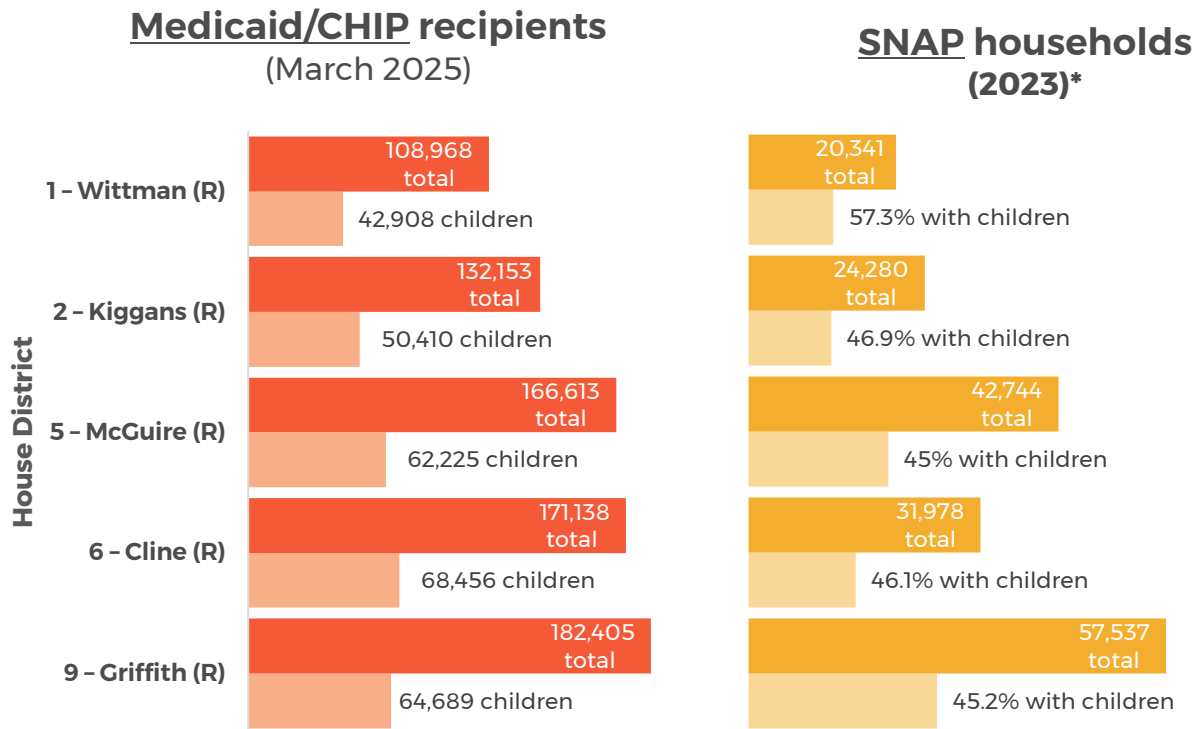
EITC
(Earned income tax credit)
522,000*
Households in '23



SSI
(Supplemental Security Program)
148,756
Recipients in '24

Including Those in Republican Districts

All six Democrats from Virginia voted against the House budget resolution while all five Republicans voted for it. But hundreds of thousands of Virginians who need these programs live in Republican districts. Most are low-income children, senior citizens, or people with disabilities.



* note: most "households" have 2 or more people.

Spending Cuts Would Be Devastating

There is no way to cut spending at these levels simply by reducing waste and fraud. States like Virginia already have active [fraud detection units](#) in multiple agencies. They recover millions of dollars, mostly from [service providers](#). That won't be nearly enough to fund trillion-dollar tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires. Moreover, Virginia and other states recently completed "unwinding" their social programs after the pandemic, identifying people who were no longer eligible. Between April 2023 and August 2024, almost 500,000 people were dropped from [Medicaid](#) in Virginia.

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If Republicans tighten up eligibility for Medicaid, then more Virginians will be uninsured. The same thing will happen if they cut back on subsidies for the ACA marketplace. As a result,

more people will [postpone or forgo](#) the medical care they need, compromising their health; doctors and hospitals will have more uncompensated care. One reason many Republican state legislators in Virginia agreed to Medicaid expansion in 2018 was to save financially-strapped [rural hospitals](#).

Medicaid already [pays doctors and hospitals less](#) than Medicare or private insurance for most types of medical care. This helps explain why [Medicaid spending](#) per enrollee has been growing more slowly than Medicare and much more slowly than private insurance. It's also why some Medicaid patients have trouble getting access to medical care; in Virginia, access to Medicaid [prenatal care](#) is a known problem. Reducing reimbursements could cause even more doctors and hospitals to stop accepting Medicaid patients.

Likewise, cuts to eligibility or benefits in food assistance programs would hurt thousands of Virginians. The Urban Institute analyzed one option, reducing the value of the [Thrifty Food Plan](#), and found that a modestly priced meal in Virginia would then cost 68% more than the maximum SNAP benefit. We know that hungry children don't perform as well in school; for adults, spending more on food means spending less on items like prescription drugs and car repairs.

Cuts Have Little Public Support

Americans strongly oppose these kinds of cuts. In a recent poll by the respected [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), less than 20 percent of Americans (and only one-third of Republicans) favored cutbacks to Medicaid. Forty percent said Medicaid spending should stay the same, while 42 percent wanted Congress to spend *more* on the program. Two-thirds of Trump voters want Congress to spend the same or more on Medicaid.



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Another [poll](#) taken this year found that only 17 percent of Americans want to cut Medicaid funding to pay for tax cuts. Less than one-quarter of Americans support adding per capita caps on Medicaid or converting Medicaid to a block grant. Few Americans want to pay for tax cuts by reducing funds for states that expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

Most Americans oppose cuts to [SNAP benefits](#) and attempts to end free and reduced-price meals for low-income schoolchildren. In fact, they want to spend more. [Large majorities](#) of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans agree that “we should continue to increase SNAP benefit amounts to reflect current nutrition guidance and changing food costs.” In short, the cuts Republicans have in mind are bad policy and bad politics.