



June 27, 2025

Preserve Access to Health Care and Food for Families

What you do for the least among you, you do for Jesus. Matthew 25: 34-40

As Congress nears a potential vote on its budget reconciliation bill, we ask our Congressional delegation to oppose cuts that will harm people in poverty and urge our fellow Catholics to do the same.

Preservation of the dignity and sanctity of life must be the paramount concern of government action. Provisions in the budget that threaten life, unintentionally or otherwise, include changes to Medicaid that put pregnant and new mothers at risk and could leave millions of low-income families without access to health care. Of equally deep concern are cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) which helps many struggling individuals and families put food on their tables.

All told, the legislation would cut \$700 billion over 10 years from Medicaid, leaving 7.6 million American families without health-care coverage. It would reduce spending for food assistance to the nation's poorest by an estimated \$300 billion over 10 years, leaving 40 million low-income persons, including 16 million children, hungry. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the bill transfers wealth from citizens with the lowest tenth of income to those with the highest tenth of income, the largest transfer in U.S. history.

The Medicaid proposals include not only substantial cuts in funding, but also added bureaucratic barriers to eligibility. For families, pregnant and new moms, seniors, people with disabilities, and children, the bill eliminates prior changes to Medicaid that were designed to streamline the enrollment process and improve retention rates. Moving toward greater bureaucracy and needless red tape will remove qualified individuals from Medicaid not because of waste, fraud or abuse but due to inadvertent paperwork errors.

Medicaid is a critical safety net support for struggling families, children and people with disabilities. In Washington state, where Medicaid is known as Apple Health, approximately 198,000 people would lose Medicaid coverage, with the biggest impact on people living in Eastern and Central Washington. Those numbers include people working for Amazon, Walmart, Safeway, Albertson's, Uber, DoorDash and other highly profitable organizations.

People without health insurance will forego preventative health services, waiting until there is an emergency to seek care at a hospital, which must serve anyone who shows up in the emergency room. Hospital emergency rooms are ill-equipped to provide the needed care for cancer patients or people with diabetes or other long term, treatable illnesses. By denying access to health

insurance, the budget reconciliation bill ensures worse health outcomes for people in poverty, denying their dignity and jeopardizing the sanctity of their lives.

In much the same way, cuts to food assistance threaten the lives of people living in poverty. The Senate proposes a \$211 billion cut to SNAP, \$80 billion less than the House version. SNAP helps feed 41 million Americans in need. Depriving people of food, a basic necessity to sustain life, to save money, while also providing substantial income tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans, is unjustifiable.

Advocacy for and with those who are suffering is an integral component of our Baptismal call. The current budget proposals are more likely to move people in need out of sight, out of mind, rather than moving them out of poverty. It is thus imperative that all Catholics raise our voices and ask our congressional delegation to oppose cuts to Medicaid and SNAP and find budget solutions that protect the dignity and sanctity of life by ensuring access to basic necessities.

Reducing federal spending without causing greater harm to those who are struggling the most is possible, if our elected leaders are willing to prioritize helping people living in poverty rise to their full human potential.

In the heart of Christ,



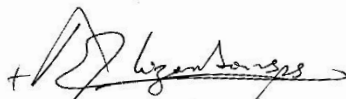
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Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson
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