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The Impacts of Proposed Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Cuts on the African-American Community

To end hunger and poverty in the United States by 2030, our country needs to support a budget that improves the lives of men, women, and children. Unfortunately, the Trump administration and Congress are proposing dramatic cuts to programs that promote economic opportunity or provide food assistance to some of the poorest families in the United States.

These budget cuts would hit the African-American community particularly hard since African-American households are up to three times more likely to experience hunger and poverty.ⁱ

The Impact of Cutting SNAP

In 2015, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) lifted 2.1 million African Americans, including 1 million children, out of poverty.ⁱⁱ Today, about 13 million African Americans rely on SNAP to put food on the table.ⁱⁱⁱ In other words, 1 in 4 African American-headed households benefit from SNAP.^{iv} On average, African-American families receive SNAP benefits of \$260 a month^v, or \$1.03 per person per meal.^{vi}

With SNAP, a typical African American household of three can live on \$1,330 per month^{vii}. Cuts to this program could:

- **Decrease the average monthly income of African-American households by up to one-third.** This can leave the typical African-American household of three with only \$940^{viii} per month to take care of all of its needs (e.g., housing, food, healthcare).
- **Reduce the current meal benefit of \$1.03 that the average African American household receives.** This will push already food-insecure African-American households even deeper into hunger.

It's hard to eat on \$1.03 per meal. It is even harder to eat on less than \$1.03 per meal. Making cuts to SNAP would be detrimental to the African-American community and push



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our country further away from the goal of ending hunger by 2030.

The Impact of Cutting Medicaid

Medicaid is an affordable health insurance policy for low-income Americans. Nearly 12.6 million low-income African Americans benefit from Medicaid.^{ix} Making cuts to this program would double the out-of-pocket healthcare expenses among low-income African-American households already struggling to put food on the table. This would make families choose between paying for medicine and food—and would increase hunger among African-American households.

The Impact of Not Expanding the EITC

More than 5 million African American workers benefit from the earned income tax credit (EITC).^x Strengthening the EITC by lowering the eligibility age, increasing the current benefit for workers not raising children, and increasing the threshold of what qualifying individuals can earn, would accomplish the following:

- **It would protect 2.3 million African American workers who are not raising children from being taxed into poverty.**^{xi}
- **It would help nearly 450,000 young African American low-wage workers fight hunger and**

poverty.^{xii} Currently, African-Americans aged 21-24 represent 16 percent of young workers earning less than \$15,000 each year.^{xiii} Lowering the age of the EITC from 25 years old to 21 years old for young workers without children would increase the income for these young workers, many of whom are living below the federal poverty line.

The Impact of Changes to Criminal Justice Funding

African Americans are disproportionately more likely to be stopped, ticketed, arrested, and sentenced than their white counterparts. Traditionally, the Department of Justice has been a critical partner in enforcing civil rights protections and helping local police departments reverse racially unequal practices—which is needed to end U.S. hunger by 2030.

- Budget proposals should take a balanced approach to ensure that criminal justice practices do not increase hunger and poverty among low-income communities.

Increasing funding for tough-on-crime tactics is likely to target African-American neighborhoods that have poverty rates of 20 percent or higher—increasing the number of African-American households that fall deeper into hunger because of mass incarceration.

- Cutting funds for civil rights programs and enforcement will likely increase racial bias at the local, state, and federal level, which will likely increase hunger and poverty among low-income African-American communities.
- Cutting grants for local police departments will not provide support for departments to end racially biased practices that hurt African-American households.

Increasing funding for tough-on-crime tactics while decreasing civil rights protections will deepen hunger and poverty for African-American households, pushing our country further away from achieving our 2030 goal.

Endnotes

ⁱ “Hunger and Poverty Among African-Americans.” Bread for the World. February 2018.

<http://www.bread.org/sites/default/files/downloads/poverty-hunger-among-african-americans-february-2018.pdf>

ⁱⁱ “SNAP Helps Millions of African-Americans.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. February 2018.

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-helps-millions-of-african-americans>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} “Alisha Coleman-Jensen et al., “Household Food Security in the United States in 2016, Statistical Supplement,” USDA, September 2017, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84973/err-237.pdf>

^v “SNAP Helps Millions of African-Americans.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. February 2018.

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-helps-millions-of-african-americans>.

^{vi} Bread analysis: “Receipt of Food Stamps by Race: Table B22005I.” American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B22005I&prodType=table and “SNAP Helps Millions of African-Americans.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. February 2018.

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-helps-millions-of-african-americans>.

^{vii} “SNAP Helps Millions of African Americans.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. February 2018. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-helps-millions-of-african-americans>

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Bread analysis based on “Health Coverage by Race and Ethnicity: Changes Under the ACA.” Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. January 2018. Figure 5. <https://www.kff.org/report-section/health-coverage-by-race-and-ethnicity-changes-under-the-aca-issue-brief/>

^x “The Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, and African Americans.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. July 2015. <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/7-21-15tax-factsheet1.pdf>

^{xi} Bread analysis: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <http://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/strengthening-the-eitc-for-childless-workers-would-promote-work-and-reduce> and <http://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/who-are-the-low-income-childless-adults-facing-the-loss-of-snap-in-2016>

<http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/2014-09-17-Youth-EITC-Young-Workers-FINAL.pdf>

^{xii} Bread analysis: “EITC Expansion Proposals: What’s at Stake for Young Workers.” CLASP.

<http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/2014-09-17-Youth-EITC-Young-Workers-FINAL.pdf>

^{xiii} Ibid.