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## **WV Faith & Civic Groups Call for an End to Political “Hunger Games” in Response to Proposed SNAP Cuts**

*Don't Take Food from Kids While Protecting Corporate Tax Loopholes*

Charleston, WV – Local anti-hunger advocates supporting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) held a press conference today at Covenant House in response to a likely vote in the U.S. House of Representatives this week that would cut food assistance by [\\$40 billion over 10 years and affect up to six million Americans](#).

Speakers at the event evoked the theme of the recent Hollywood blockbuster “The Hunger Games,” calling on Congress to stop playing political “hunger games” by proposing deep cuts to SNAP while at the same time continuing to protect tax loopholes that allow corporations like Apple, General Electric, and Verizon to avoid paying their fair share in federal taxes.

Over the last two years, Congress has already cut over a trillion dollars from services and benefits provided through programs like SNAP. At the same time that House leadership is promoting this new cut, they refuse to end tax loopholes that corporate giants like Apple, General Electric and Verizon use to avoid paying any federal income taxes, or dramatically reduce what they pay, despite making billions in profits.

“Congress has already stacked the deck against the middle-class and working families in this country by making across-the-board cuts to healthcare, education and public safety,” said Gary Zuckett, Exec. Director of WV Citizen Action. “Now on top of those cuts, it will punish hungry children, families and seniors while it continues to reward corporations with tax breaks and loopholes.”

Sam Hickman, CEO of the WV Chapter of National Assoc. of Social Workers, commented, “Children with unhealthy diets and suffering hunger are adversely affected in their learning and behavior. The cuts are a wrong-headed idea taking our children in the wrong direction.”

Father Brian O'Donnell spoke for the WV Council of Churches, “The judgment of a culture is what it does to help those on the margins.”

The proposed \$40 billion cut to SNAP, also known as Food Stamps, would come on top of across-the-board cuts to SNAP slated to begin in November, which would lower the average benefit per

person to less than \$1.40 per meal. The \$40 billion cut would impact a range of people but would disproportionately hurt children, who make up almost half of SNAP recipients.

“Nearly two fifths of those who receive SNAP benefits in West Virginia are children,” stated Sean O’Leary from the WV Center on Budget & Policy. “Another quarter are the adults with children in their households”, Sean added. (see WV-CBBP chart at end of release for rest of the pie)

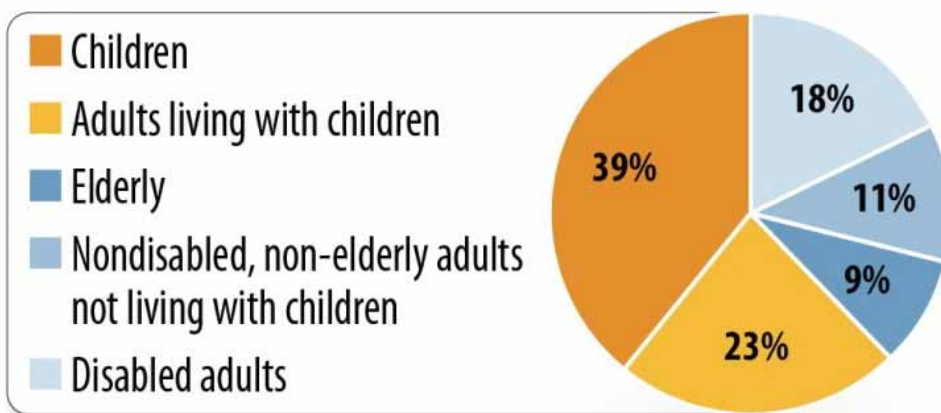
In 2011, nearly 1 million children lived in families that had to limit how much they could eat because of an inability to afford food. Food insecurity among such families would increase if SNAP benefits were cut under the new legislation proposed by House Leadership. The \$40 billion cut over the next 10 years would also:

- Cut nutrition assistance for 210,000 children who receive free meals at school
- Cut food assistance for 170,000 veterans who depend on SNAP
- Place increased burdens on churches, food pantries, soup kitchens and agencies who in communities with large populations facing food insecurity

“It’s outrageous that Congress would play political games with people who are struggling to put food on the table. We are sending a message to our representatives in the House to stand up and protect our vulnerable families and communities, especially those who have been hardest hit by the recession,” stated Zuckett.

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## Nearly Two-Fifths of Those Who Receive SNAP Benefits in West Virginia Are Children; Almost One-Quarter Are Adults Living With Children



Source: CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, FY 2011