

U.S. poverty letter to the editor (LTE) writing worksheet

Start with your why: how you feel and why it matters

How do you feel about Congress passing a reconciliation bill that cuts essential programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid to give tax breaks to the wealthy? Do you have personal experience that can stress the important role SNAP and Medicaid serve in your community?

Feelings and values to tap into

- **Anger** – at injustice and misplaced priorities
- **Betrayal / Disappointment** – at leaders ignoring real needs
- **Fear** – for yourself, kids, neighbors, or community
- **Hope** – that sharing your story can make a real difference
- **Dignity** – everyone deserves to live with respect, no matter their income
- **Solidarity** – with others going through the same struggle
- **Justice** – policies should benefit people most impacted, not just the wealthy few

Message starters to build on

- I'm beyond angry that Congress passed a bill that slashes support for basic needs to fund tax breaks for the wealthy.
- In [your community], families are already struggling to pay for food, housing, and health care. That's why Congress' decision to cut SNAP and Medicaid is frustrating.
- I believe [your community] is stronger when everyone can meet their basic needs. The "One Big, Beautiful Bill" that Congress just passed is an ugly step backwards for our entire community.
- In [your community], we believe in [looking out for each other, or choose another value]. The decision Congress made to cut funding for SNAP and Medicaid to fund tax breaks for wealthier people doesn't reflect our values. This is a betrayal of our entire community.

Share the local impact

Help your readers and members of Congress understand what's really at stake in your community. How have you, your family, or people you know benefited from SNAP or

Medicaid? By supporting this bill, what message are members of Congress sending to people who are already struggling?

Message starters to build on

- These cuts will increase poverty, food insecurity, and hardship. In [your community], this will mean more empty refrigerators, more untreated illness, and more fear about the future.
- SNAP helps over 40 million Americans afford groceries, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities. Because of this bill, one million children, and millions of seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans, will see their food assistance cut substantially or terminated.
- Medicaid provides health coverage to more than 80 million people, including 50 percent of children in the U.S. This bill includes the largest cut to Medicaid in history. Congress has chosen to put children's health at risk in order to fund tax breaks for the wealthy.
- SNAP dollars are spent quickly and locally at grocery stores, farmer's markets, and local retailers. Medicaid is the largest source of federal funding for hospitals. Cutting SNAP and Medicaid means less food on the table, reduced access to health care, and less money for small businesses that make our communities work.

End with a clear call to action

Speak directly to your members of Congress and to your community. Whether your lawmakers voted to protect vital programs or supported harmful cuts, make your message clear.

If your members of Congress voted no and opposed the cuts:

- Congress has placed our community in harm's way so as to please the wealthiest among us. This is a betrayal of trust that we must not forget. I'm grateful to [Rep./Sen.'s name] for standing with us and voting against these harmful cuts. This is only the beginning. We will keep fighting together for policies that meet the true needs of our community.

If your members of Congress voted yes and supported the cuts:

- [Rep./Sen.'s name] voted for a bill that targets those with the greatest need to placate the wealthiest among us. Our community deserves better. We need leaders that understand the real needs of their state/district. This is a betrayal of trust that we will not forget.