



# COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

## *The Human Needs Report*

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### **President Trump's FY20 Budget Slashes Critical Human Needs Programs**

The Trump Administration released its [Fiscal Year 2020 topline budget](#) message, priorities, and summary tables on March 11, with detailed line-item information released on March 18. From slashing housing

assistance, Medicaid, SNAP/food stamps, education, and other basic needs programs, to proposing harsh work reporting requirements for several federal programs, to completely eliminating programs like home heating and cooling assistance for low-income people and food packages for low-income seniors, President Trump's FY20 budget would leave millions of Americans without the assistance they need. At the same time, the budget permanently extends the **GOP tax cuts** passed in 2017, which the House Budget Committee [says](#) will add another \$1 trillion to deficits over the last four years of the 10-year budget window.

Overall, the Trump budget proposes large cuts to funding for FY20 domestic and international annually-appropriated programs below FY19 levels. While the Administration says the cuts would amount to 5 percent, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [explains](#) that these cuts would actually equate to 9 percent (\$54 billion), and to 11 percent (\$69 billion) after adjusting for inflation. By the end of the 10-year budget window, domestic and international funding would be 24 percent below the 2019 level, or 41 percent below in inflation-adjusted terms.

The [cuts](#) to mandatory programs include reductions over 10 years of \$1.4 trillion to Medicaid, \$220 billion to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), \$70 billion to Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and \$21 billion to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). According to [Bread for the World](#), every religious congregation in the U.S. would need to raise an additional \$400,000 each year for the next 10 years to make up for the proposed cuts to anti-hunger and poverty programs found in the Trump Administration's FY20 budget proposal.

The defense side of the Trump budget gets a big boost, however. The President's budget ignores statutory spending caps for defense spending by proposing \$174 billion for the uncapped Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) fund, in addition to the capped funding of \$576 billion for defense spending for FY20, leading to a total defense-related budget allocation of \$750 billion. This would be \$34 billion more than Congress appropriated for FY19 in total; the OCO funding would be more than double the \$69 billion provided for OCO this year, despite the fact that OCO war-related operations are scheduled to diminish. The President is also [proposing](#) an additional \$8.6 billion in funding for building a border wall, and \$2.7 billion to continue jailing immigrants—including families and children—at historic high levels.

While the President's budget as a whole does not move through Congress or become law, it is a statement of priorities from the White House. As CHN's [March 11 statement](#) notes, "President Trump's budget for FY 2020 is consistent with his presidency so far. It is all about denying help to those who lack power or wealth and lavishing advantage to those who have both." Even as some members of President Trump's own party reject his budget, some proposals it contains are ones advocates have seen before from previous GOP budgets and legislation, and they may be a sign of proposals to come in future budgets and spending bills. Moreover, the Trump Administration is intent on implementing some of its restrictive policy proposals, such as work reporting requirements and caps on Medicaid funding, through rule changes they assert do not require Congressional action. Advocates have committed to fighting proposals like these that will harm low-income families and individuals.

A note on budget terminology: throughout these articles, you will see references to the two main categories of federal spending: “discretionary” and “mandatory.” Discretionary spending refers to those programs that require annual appropriations by Congress. Most defense, education, and housing fall into this category, plus many social service, environmental and community development programs. Mandatory spending includes programs like Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP/food stamps, and other basic safety net programs that do not require annual appropriations. Instead, Congress authorizes the way they spend money by legislation. Congress can cut or expand these programs by amending the legislation that authorizes them.

[CHN’s FY20 Budget and Appropriations resource page](#) is constantly updated with helpful resources and analyses of the Trump budget from many expert organizations, including resources on health, nutrition, housing, fair revenues, and more. The Coalition on Human Needs also hosted a webinar on President Trump’s budget on March 14; a recording of the webinar will be added to the resource page as soon as it is available. Stay tuned to upcoming *Human Needs Reports* for additional analysis of Congressional budget proposals.

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## Select Trump Administration FY20 Departmental Budget Requests

The Coalition on Human Needs compiled information from the President’s FY20 budget request for select government departments that most directly impact low-income and other disadvantaged populations, including the Department of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Labor, as well as other areas of note.

### *Department of Agriculture*

In addition to supporting rural and agricultural programs, the Department of Agriculture’s budget funds a variety of nutrition assistance programs for people with low incomes. The proposed budget would cut USDA’s discretionary budget by [13 percent](#) from FY19 to FY20.

President Trump’s budget calls for massive cuts to the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/food stamps** of more than \$220 billion over 10 years. These cuts are achieved in part by reviving the widely ridiculed proposal from his FY19 budget to replace some of the debit card assistance SNAP recipients currently receive with boxes of non-perishable food items that would be administratively costly, inefficient, stigmatizing, and would not allow families to choose the foods they need. The budget would also tighten restrictions on unemployed and underemployed SNAP recipients who can’t document sufficient weekly work hours, which would take food away from an estimated 755,000 people. In addition, the budget eliminates **SNAP nutrition education** funding and the **Commodity Supplemental Food Program**, which distributes food boxes to low-income home-bound seniors.

According to the [Food Research & Action Center](#), the President's fiscal year 2020 budget cuts **child nutrition programs** by \$1.7 billion over the next 10 years. It reduces the number of schools eligible to implement the **Community Eligibility Program**, an option that reduces the administrative work of operating the school nutrition programs for high-poverty schools.

The budget includes \$5.8 billion in funding for the **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**, which constitutes a 4.5 percent (\$275 million) reduction in WIC funding from the FY 2019 appropriated level. The [National WIC Association](#) is advocating for a small increase to \$6.15 billion in total WIC funding.

For more information, see pieces from the [Food Research & Action Center](#), the [National WIC Association](#), and the budget summary from the [Department of Agriculture](#).

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### ***Department of Education***

President Trump's proposed budget would make college more costly for low- and moderate-income students and their families, would flat-fund or cut various K-12 programs, and diverts billions of dollars into support for private K-12 schools. The proposed budget would cut the Department of Education's budget by \$8.5 billion, or 12 percent below the FY19 level, to \$62 billion. All told, 29 discretionary programs throughout the Department of Education would be eliminated.

The President's proposal would slash student aid for higher education by \$207 billion over 10 years, eliminate **Subsidized Stafford loans**, and eliminate **Public Service Loan Forgiveness**. The budget would also eliminate the **GEAR UP** program, which supports low-income students from high school into their first year of college, and **Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants** that augment Pell Grants for more than a million of the neediest college students. The **TRIO** program would be turned into a State formula grant.

The annually-appropriated funding for **Pell Grants** would support a maximum annual grant of \$6,195. The budget would expand Pell eligibility to certain short-term certification programs. The **Federal Work Study** program would be cut by more than half, from \$1.1 billion to \$500 million. Funding for **adult education state grants** that help foundation skills and English literacy instruction to over 1.5 million individuals is cut by \$156.1 million, or more than 24 percent. **Perkins career and technical education state grants**, which support post-secondary education for more than 12 million students, are flat-funded from FY19.

In **K-12 education programs**, the budget provides level funding from FY19 for **Title I** low-income schools. It eliminates \$190 million in **literacy instruction** grants to states. The Trump budget level funds **K-12 special education (IDEA programs)**. It zeroes out the modest \$17.6 million appropriation for the **Special Olympics**. Funding would be eliminated for **21st Century Community Learning Centers**, which provide

before-school, after-school, and summer school programs for nearly 2 million children. The budget includes a proposal to implement a **private school scholarship tax credit** of up to \$50 billion over 10 years, an increased effort to subsidize private school attendance that critics say would divert resources from improving education for low-income students.

The Center for American Progress has [state-by-state impacts](#) of some of the K-12 cuts in the Trump budget. For more information, see the [National Skills Coalition](#) and the budget summary from the [Department of Education](#).

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### ***Department of Health and Human Services***

While the vast majority of the budget for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provides funds for Medicare and Medicaid, the agency covers a wide variety of programs, from the Affordable Care Act and medical research to child care and vital community services for low-income people. The President's proposal cuts the HHS FY20 budget by [12 percent](#).

Several important programs and services are eliminated in the Trump budget, including the **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**, which provides operating expenses for roughly 1,100 poverty-fighting community action agencies, the **Social Services Block Grant**, which funds services for low-income children, families, and seniors, and the **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**, which provides heating and cooling assistance to about 6 million low-income households.

The Trump proposal would cut **Medicaid** by \$1.5 trillion and Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace subsidies by \$478 billion over 10 years. It would create a \$1.2 trillion block grant to replace the ACA, leaving a net cut to Medicaid and ACA of \$777 billion over ten years, according to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#). It would do this primarily by repealing the **ACA** and replacing it with a bill similar to the former Graham-Cassidy proposal, under which millions of Americans would lose health coverage. The budget would repeal the ACA's **Medicaid expansion**; to date, 37 states have expanded Medicaid, which has resulted in coverage for [17 million](#) newly eligible adults. The budget would give states the option of accepting federal Medicaid dollars in the form of inadequate block grants or per capita caps in exchange for more authority to restrict eligibility or benefits or to increase payments by low-income beneficiaries. These proposals would end the ACA's nationwide protections for people with pre-existing conditions, cause millions more people to become uninsured, and increase costs and otherwise impede access to health care for millions more.

The budget proposes various ways of achieving Medicaid cuts, such as increased documentation requirements to prove immigration/citizenship status, re-imposing asset tests, and making it harder for some seniors and people with disabilities to qualify for Medicaid without selling their homes. Medicaid would also be taken away from adults who can't document sufficient weekly work hours, which could

cause [1.7 million people](#) to lose coverage. The budget estimates the work reporting rules will result in a \$130 billion cut in Medicaid costs over 10 years.

The budget also proposes nearly [\\$600 billion](#) in net **Medicare** spending reductions over 10 years. Most of the proposals would reduce payments to health care providers, but prescription drug costs for seniors in the “doughnut hole” in Medicare prescription drug coverage would increase, costing \$75 billion over 10 years. The Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is estimated to spend \$1.752 billion less in FY 2020 than in the current year because an enhanced federal match rate to states is scheduled to drop from a maximum of 23 percentage points to 11.5 percentage points.

The **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** program is cut by more than \$21 billion, or 10 percent, over 10 years. The basic block grant, which had been flat-funded since TANF’s inception in 1996, is cut by \$1.4 billion in FY 2020. In addition, the TANF Contingency Fund is almost eliminated (dropping from \$597 million to \$63 million in FY 2020). Originally designed for states to tap if economic conditions cause an increase in eligible families, the Contingency Fund has not proved usable for most states.

The budget includes a one-time, \$1 billion mandatory investment for states to encourage private sector investment in **child care**, but the proposal would require states to roll back basic protections that keep children safe to get the funding. **Head Start** and the **Child Care Development Block Grant** are level funded at FY19 levels. However, as noted elsewhere in this *Human Needs Report*, the \$1.2 billion afterschool program 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, as well as the Social Services Block Grant, which provides child care, senior care and other family services, are slated for elimination.

The **Child Support Enforcement Program** would be cut by \$1.7 billion over 10 years. It would incorporate a work requirement for noncustodial parents overdue in their child support payments, and would allow limited federal funding to support employment and training services for these parents.

For more information, see this piece from [Families USA](#), the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) and the budget summary from the [Department of Health and Human Services](#).

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### ***Department of Housing and Urban Development***

According to the [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#), the Administration proposes to cut HUD’s budget by \$9.6 billion, or 18 percent below 2019 enacted levels.

President Trump’s budget would slash or eliminate many critical low-income housing programs and increase rents and impose harmful work reporting requirement on struggling families. The proposal would eliminate essential housing and community development programs like the **National Housing Trust Fund**, which [supports](#) rental housing for low-income renters such as seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and households that have experienced homelessness, and the **Public Housing Capital Fund**,

which is needed to maintain units. The budget would move towards dismantling public housing developments, seeking to sell them off to landlords who would get voucher subsidies (but without enough funds for vouchers to sustain such a shift). Also slated for elimination in the proposal are the **Choice Neighborhoods program, the Community Development Block Grant, and the HOME Investment Partnership Program**, which together aid low-income communities in improving basic infrastructure, providing services to youth and seniors, rehabilitating housing, and promoting economic development. It proposes to eliminate the **Indian Community Development Block Grant** and cut the **Native American Housing Block Grant** by 20 percent.

In addition, the proposed HUD budget would cut funding for **Rental Assistance Programs, including Housing Choice Vouchers, Public Housing, Project-Based Rental Assistance, and Housing for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities**, by 11 percent. The budget would also impose harmful rent increases and harsh work reporting requirements. It would increase the amount of rent paid by non-elderly, non-disabled tenants from 30 percent of adjusted income to 35 percent of gross income, triple minimum rents paid by some, and eliminate deductions that help seniors and people with disabilities. According to the [National Alliance of HUD Tenants](#), rents would jump an average of 20 percent for 4.6 million households. The proposal also allows housing providers to impose harsh work reporting requirements, without providing resources to help people gain needed skills or employment.

For more information, see the [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#), the [National Alliance of HUD Tenants](#), and the budget summary from the [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#).

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### ***Department of Labor***

The proposed budget would cut the Labor Department's discretionary budget by 9.7 percent, or nearly \$1.2 billion, from FY19 to FY20.

As the National Skills Coalition [reports](#), the President's budget requests level funding for **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I** state formula grants, which help people with barriers to work gain new skills and find employment. The budget would cut \$86 million – or nearly 40 percent – from **National Dislocated Worker national grants**, \$15 million (15.9 percent) from **Reentry Employment Opportunities** and \$5 million (5.5 percent) from **YouthBuild**. It would eliminate funding for **Indian and Native American Programs** and **Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Programs** (also known as the National Farmworker Jobs Program), which provides workforce and development and employment assistance for migrant and seasonal farmworkers to help them prepare for stable, year-round employment. The **Senior Community Service Employment Program**, which helps low-income senior citizens find work, would also be eliminated.

The Office of **Disability Employment Policy** is cut by more than \$11 million, or more than 29 percent, from FY19 to FY20. The budget requests \$160 million for **Apprenticeship programs**, the same amount appropriated in FY19. Funding for the **Women's Bureau** is slashed by 74 percent.

For more information, see an analysis from the [National Skills Coalition](#) and the budget summary from the [Department of Labor](#).

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### ***Other Areas of Note***

The budget also contains other moves that advocates oppose for departments not listed above.

The Trump blueprint calls for \$7.2 billion in FY20 for the entire Census Bureau, even though Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has said that the Bureau would need \$7.4 billion in FY20 for the **2020 Decennial Census** alone, not to mention the 100+ other economic and household surveys the Census Bureau oversees. Census experts have estimated that approximately \$8 billion in FY20 is needed to carry out the 2020 Census, plus additional funds for the rest of the Census Bureau's surveys. The amount proposed in the budget is shockingly inadequate, and would be expected to result in an inaccurate count (made far worse if the citizenship question sought by the Trump Administration is ruled allowable by the Supreme Court).

The Trump budget would slash \$84 billion over the coming decade from **federal disability programs, including Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**.

The Trump Administration's efforts to gut the **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau** continue with this budget proposal. Funding for the **CFPB** would be made subject to the appropriations process (rather than receiving money from the Federal Reserve, as it currently does) in 2021 and then be almost completely zeroed out. Funding for FY20 would be cut back to FY15 levels.

The **Legal Services Corporation** would be eliminated, ending federal support for civil legal assistance for low-income people with housing, domestic violence, employment, consumer, or other legal trouble. Also eliminated would be the **Corporation for National and Community Service**, which runs programs including AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Senior Corps.

The **Environmental Protection Agency** would see its budget slashed by 31 percent under the Trump blueprint.

The budget requests \$8.6 billion for the construction of a **border wall**. It also requests funding for 60,000 **immigrant detention beds**, including 10,000 family detention beds, and 15,000 new DHS law enforcement officers.



The budget also eliminates the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, and D.C. Tuition Assistance Grants.**

The budget would require a Social Security number that is valid for employment to claim the **Child Tax Credit.** This would deny this assistance to certain immigrant families, most of whose children are U.S. citizens.

The **Department of Transportation** would see a 19 percent budget cut.

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### **Nutrition Assistance Cuts Begin for 1.35 million Puerto Ricans**

Wednesday, March 20 marks the 18-month anniversary of Hurricane Maria making landfall in Puerto Rico, and the island is still trying to recover. The latest impediment has to do with food aid. After Maria hit (and Irma before that), Congress temporarily increased funds for Puerto Rico's Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP). NAP is the island's more limited version of SNAP/food stamps.

Unfortunately, the emergency increase has run out. In early March, half of the 1.35 million Puerto Ricans who receive benefits under NAP began to see their benefits cut. The other half of the 1.35 million NAP recipients will see cuts beginning this Friday, March 22.

Puerto Rico's NAP troubles are, in part, due to the way Congress decided to fund the program. Unlike SNAP in the states and other territories besides Puerto Rico, NAP does not automatically expand in the event of a natural disaster or economic downturn. Rather, Puerto Rico's NAP relies on a fixed block grant that can only increase to meet need if Congress appropriates additional funds.

[According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), a Puerto Rican family of four with no or very low cash income, for example, would have received the maximum NAP benefit of \$649 last month – the same amount that a similar household in the states would receive from SNAP. Now, however, this household's monthly benefit will drop by 37 percent to \$410, which is the pre-disaster benefit level. An older adult who lives alone and received \$194 last month will see his or her benefits drop by 42 percent to \$112.

In order to restore the benefits under the emergency increase, advocates say \$600 million is needed – and that will only take the extra benefits to Sept. 30, the end of the current fiscal year. As reported in the [Feb. 14 Human Needs Report](#), a disaster aid package was included in the FY19 spending bill (H.R. 268) passed by the House. However, it was not included in the final FY19 spending bill passed by Congress in February because President Trump opposed the food aid and other assistance for Puerto Rico.

At the end of February, Sens. David Perdue (R-GA) and Johnny Isakson (R-GA) introduced a disaster aid package ([S. 572](#)) that would provide \$610 million for Puerto Rico's NAP benefits, along with other aid for victims of other natural disasters across several states and territories. The measure reportedly has bipartisan support, now including the support of the White House. However, in early March, Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) announced that a separate disaster aid package was in the works, negotiating additional needs such as crop losses in various states and tornado damage in Alabama, as well as efforts to include modest relief beyond the NAP aid in Puerto Rico. According to [Roll Call](#), an initial vote on a disaster aid package could happen in the Senate on March 26. The exact contents of the measure the chamber will take up is unknown, but funding for Puerto Rico reportedly remains a sticking point in the negotiations.

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### **Trump Issues First Veto, but Fight over Emergency Declaration Continues**

President Trump issued the first veto of his presidential term on Friday, March 15, the day after 12 Senate Republicans crossed the aisle and joined all Democrats in [approving](#) a resolution that would terminate the President's declaration of a national emergency on the southern border.

The veto and the vote in the Senate came after the House approved an identical resolution in late February by a vote of [245-182](#). House leaders now say they will attempt to override Trump's veto on Tuesday, March 26, after they return from the current Congressional recess. A veto override is not expected to be successful, given that a two-thirds majority is needed and only 13 House Republicans crossed over to join Democrats in approving the resolution. However, Trump's veto will not be the last word on the matter.

First, a number of lawsuits are expected to be filed arguing that Trump has exceeded his authority as President. The first lawsuit was filed last month by 16 state attorneys general, led by California's Xavier Becerra. (Since then, more states have signed on.)

Second, under the National Emergencies Act, both chambers of Congress are authorized – if not compelled – to hold votes on the emergency declaration every six months, as long as it remains in force. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has indicated that these votes will take place. (The [National Emergencies Act states](#), “Not later than six months after a national emergency is declared, and not later than the end of each six-month period thereafter that such emergency continues, each House of Congress shall meet to consider a vote on a joint resolution to determine whether that emergency shall be terminated.”)

Third, Senate Republicans, worried that Congress could be abdicating its constitutional power-of-the-purse responsibilities to the executive branch, [are contemplating](#) amending the National Emergencies Act to require that both chambers of Congress *affirmatively* vote to support a president's declaration of an emergency within 30 days of the emergency being declared, in order for it to continue in effect.

Democrats (and some Republicans) argue that Trump's emergency declaration amounts to an unconstitutional effort to spend tax dollars on his proposed wall along the southern border – money that Congress has not appropriated for that purpose. Democrats further argue that there is no southern border crisis. Some Republicans counter that a national emergency does, in fact, exist, and it is within the President's authority to transfer funds.

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### **Dream and Promise Act Introduced to Provide Protections for Dreamers and TPS Recipients**

On March 12, Reps. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Nydia Velázquez (D-NY), and Yvette Clarke (D-NY) introduced the Dream and Promise Act ([H.R. 6](#)). The bill would provide a pathway to lawful permanent residency and citizenship for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) beneficiaries, also known as Dreamers. In addition, and unlike previous Dream Act legislation, this bill also provides a pathway to permanent legal protections for immigrants with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforcement Departure (DED). All told, the bill would [reportedly](#) protect more than 2 million people from deportation. To date, 210 House members have signed on to H.R. 6, all Democrats.

The [bill](#) would grant Dreamers conditional permanent resident status for 10 years and cancel removal proceedings if they meet a number of requirements, including if they obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent or are in an apprenticeship program. In order to gain full lawful permanent resident (LPR) status, Dreamers must meet additional requirements. TPS and DED beneficiaries could obtain LPR status by meeting a different set of requirements, including having been in the U.S. for 3 years before the bill's enactment and having been granted TPS or DED status by certain dates.

The TPS and DED programs have protected undocumented refugees who fled war, natural disasters, and other life-threatening events in their home countries from deportation. President Trump has tried to end the DACA program and terminate TPS for individuals from Sudan, Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador, but federal courts have thus far blocked him from doing so. Complying with a court injunction, the Department of Homeland Security [announced](#) on Feb. 28 that it was extending TPS for more than 250,000 immigrants from those four countries through Jan. 2, 2020. Immigrant advocates also [filed](#) a federal lawsuit in February to block the Trump Administration from ending TPS for people from Nepal and Honduras. DED protections for individuals from Liberia are scheduled to expire on March 31.

The [National Immigration Law Center](#), [UnidosUS](#), the [Center for Law and Social Policy](#), and other organizations issued statements supporting the Dream and Promise Act and encouraging its swift passage in Congress.

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## Supreme Court Expands Focus of Census Citizenship Question Arguments

On Tuesday, April 23, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments over whether the Trump Administration may include a citizenship question in the 2020 Census – and the case just got a little more complicated.

Originally, the Court’s focus was fairly narrow: Had Administration officials violated administrative procedures (and thus, federal law) in the way they sought to include the citizenship question? As reported in the [January 22 Human Needs Report](#), a U.S. District Judge in New York ruled that, indeed they had. The ruling by U.S. District Judge Jesse Furman stated that the decision by Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to add the citizenship question to the 2020 Census was “unlawful” because of “a veritable smorgasbord of classic, clear-cut” violations of the Administrative Procedure Act, including cherry-picking evidence to support his choice.

On March 15, however, the Supreme Court expanded its focus. [In an order](#), the Court announced that it will also examine whether the citizenship question violates the enumeration clause of the U.S. Constitution. [That clause states](#), in part, “Representatives....shall be apportioned among the several States . . . according to their respective Numbers....” In other words, Census counts and the resulting apportionment are expected to be based on real numbers. [Critics of the citizenship](#) question maintain that it will result in a lower (and thus, more inaccurate) count, because many people, particularly in immigrant communities, will not want to fill out the form.

The expanded focus by the U.S. Supreme Court is a direct result of a [second federal court ruling](#), this one from earlier this month in California. In that case, U.S. District Judge Richard Seeborg wrote, “In short, the inclusion of the citizenship question on the 2020 Census threatens the very foundation of our democratic system – and does so based on a self-defeating rationale.” Seeborg agreed with the New York judge that the addition of the citizenship question violated the Administrative Procedure Act, but he went farther, finding that the question actually violates the U.S. Constitution.

And that is why the Supreme Court issued its new order and expanded the focus of its April 23 argument. As [Scotusblog.com explains](#), U.S. Solicitor General Noel Francisco wrote to the Supreme Court and asked that it examine both issues: “The only way to finally resolve whether the federal government can bring back the citizenship question, the government stressed, is to have the justices take up the constitutional issue too: Otherwise, even if the Supreme Court were to agree with the federal government that the citizenship question does not violate federal administrative laws, lower courts could still rely on the enumeration clause to block the government from including it.” Francisco further noted that the deadline for finalizing the Census form is this June, and for that reason, the best course of action would be for the Court to consider both of the questions at issue.

For more information on the importance of a fair and accurate 2020 Census, see CHN's [Census page](#), and [watch a recording of the webinar held](#) in January by CHN and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

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### **House Passes For the People Act to Reform Elections and Curtail Corruption**

The House on March 8 passed ([234-193](#), along party lines) H.R. 1, the For the People Act. According to the House Democracy Reform Task Force, chaired by Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD), [H.R. 1](#) will “make it easier, not harder, to vote; end the dominance of big money in our politics, and ensure public officials work for the public interest.” Specifically, the bill would create automatic voter registration across the country, ensure that individuals who have completed felony sentences have their full rights restored, end partisan gerrymandering, and make Election Day a federal holiday. The legislation also requires all organizations involved in political activity to disclose their large donors, requires presidents to disclose their tax returns, and creates a code of ethics for the Supreme Court. Advocates from across the human needs community, including many members of CHN, [endorsed](#) the bill and applauded its passage.

[Vox](#) called the bill “sweeping anti-corruption measures aimed at stamping out the influence of money in politics and expanding voting rights.” However, in an [op-ed](#) opposing the legislation, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) said the bill is Democrats’ attempt to “grow the federal government’s power over Americans’ political speech and elections.” Despite House passage, McConnell has [reportedly](#) already stated, “That’s not going to go anywhere.” Even if the bill did pass the Senate – an unlikely outcome – the White House has [said](#) President Trump would veto it.

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