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Feed the people, not the Pentagon: Hunger march to D.C. planned on King anniversary

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Fight, don't starve!

On Feb. 20, the Peoples Power Assembly announced a campaign to roll back food-stamp cuts and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rule changes taking effect in April.

On April 4, on the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the group will launch a “Hunger March” from Baltimore to the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C.

The Department of Agriculture must face the poor families, children and food industry workers who will suffer from its actions.

The people losing SNAP benefits (as food stamps are now officially called) are just the tip of the iceberg. Social Security Disability benefits and children’s school lunches will be cut, too.

But not the Pentagon! This year, the military got a \$130 billion increase. People will starve while billionaires like Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos pay next to nothing in taxes.

700,000 people to lose food stamps

This April, some 700,000 people will lose food stamps. Millions more will get fewer benefits under USDA rule changes made by the Trump administration.

In Maryland, over 50,000 people will lose food stamps. In Baltimore City alone, 15,000 will be cut. Nearly 25 percent of the people in Baltimore — that is 1 out of 4 people, many of them children — already go to bed hungry.

Major cuts in food stamps will also mean that many small grocery stores that service the poor will have to close their doors. This is a crisis affecting not only big cities, but many small towns and rural areas across the U.S.

School lunch programs cut; children suffer

The Department of Agriculture's rule changes not only impact food stamp recipients, they will also reverberate in cuts to free school lunch programs.

As of this writing, it remains unclear exactly how many children will lose school lunches. But, according to [USDA regulations](#), as many as 942,000 children could be cut.

Millionaire Sonny Perdue attacks workers' rights on the job

Millionaire Georgia farmer and politician Sonny Perdue is the Trump-appointed head of the USDA. On top of food stamps and school lunches, the USDA also overhauled slaughterhouse rules that threaten the safety of workers.

These rule changes removed federal limits on pork-processing line speeds. While highly profitable for the meat industry, it puts workers in danger of higher rates of injury, both acute and long term. The United Food and Commercial Workers union has [filed a lawsuit](#) to suspend the rule change.

Activists say, 'Fight, don't starve!'

On Jan. 18, during the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday holiday, Miranda Bachman from Youth Against War and Racism participated in a March to Resist War and Racism, opposing U.S. war threats against Iran and Iraq and to stop the food stamp cuts.

She explained, "People were so angry about food stamps being cut that some of those watching our protest from bus stops and the sidewalk spontaneously joined the march."

She added, "Our phones started ringing immediately. April 4 is our next step. Please [sign our petition](#)."

Andre Powell, a Peoples Power Assembly organizer and retired AFSCME state worker who helped to administer the food stamp program, explained: "We have to organize and march. It's time to revive the Food Is a Right Campaign and the old slogan, 'Fight, don't starve.'"

Powell added: "The Trump administration, and more importantly the entire capitalist system, is determined to roll back every possible workers' gain imaginable. But we can stop it if we organize and fight."

March organizers are [inviting groups to endorse](#) and join in organizing the march.

"On April 4, we will put a face on poverty. We will march from Baltimore to the doors of the USDA," concluded Powell.



Baltimore hunger march in 1980.

