

How about ‘work requirements’ for yacht owners? Ebenezer Scrooge is alive and well in Congress

written by Stephen Millies
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From pandemic to surging inflation, food banks have been overwhelmed by the needs of impoverished

families.

Using the so-called debt limit as a club, congressional leaders are pushing for more attacks on the poor. Don't expect Joe Biden to fight back. That's our job.

The current fiscal crisis is completely artificial. The debt limit, first enacted in 1917, is now set at \$31.4 trillion.

Since 1960 it's been [raised 78 times](#). It could easily be increased again.

With an approaching June 1 deadline – when Uncle Sam supposedly won't be able to pay its IOUs – the wealthy and powerful are demanding more cutbacks. These include increasing work requirements in order to eat.

[South Dakota Rep. Dusty Johnson](#) is insisting people work until they're 65 to qualify for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs) benefits, also known as food stamps. People 49 and under are already required to work 80 hours a month (or around 20 hours a week) unless they have young children or can prove they're disabled.

If people could find good-paying, full-time jobs, they wouldn't need food stamps. [Households in 32 states](#) receiving food stamps had them cut by at least \$95 per month in March as the COVID-19 emergency allotments were suspended.

Almost 45 million people use SNAP benefits and millions more qualify. This includes 9.5 million people 50 and over. The [American Association of Retired Persons \(AARP\)](#) thinks millions could have their food stamps cut.

Even the current work requirements have proven so harsh that [many states suspended them](#) during the last recession. They were halted by the U.S. government during the pandemic but are scheduled to be reinstated on July 1.

Worse is forcing people to work in order to qualify for Medicaid. After Arkansas imposed work requirements, [18,000 adults lost their access](#) to health care.

Not known is how many people died or became seriously ill after being kicked off Medicaid in the second-poorest U.S. state. Meanwhile the Walton family – owners of Arkansas-based Walmart – are enjoying a [\\$173 billion fortune](#).

Denying hunger and poverty

The whole point of these so-called work requirements is to compel people to take the lowest paying jobs with the worst conditions. This allows bosses to lower wages for millions of other workers as well.

Capitalists want to be able to use these vulnerable workers as potential strikebreakers. The labor movement has to oppose these forced work programs.

How is President Biden resisting the latest demands for cutbacks? He's bragging that he voted in the U.S. Senate for food stamp work requirements in 1996.

The alleged concern shown by the Wall Street Journal for U.S. government deficits is completely phony. Capitalists collected [\\$475 billion in tax-free interest](#) off the national debt last year. U.S. Treasury bonds have no lack of buyers.

The obvious way to reduce the federal debt is to reduce war spending. Why aren't the Democrats saying that?

The Biden administration is asking for [\\$886 billion for the Pentagon](#) in its 2024 budget. Add the CIA and a dozen other spy agencies and the real war budget is around a trillion dollars.

At least \$75 billion has been [spent on the proxy war](#) against the Russian Federation.

Apologists for capitalism are no different from Queen Marie Antoinette, who, when

informed the French people were starving, declared “let them eat cake!”

[Former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels](#) claims that only 2.5% of people are really poor.

In a 1964 speech endorsing Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan denied there were any hungry people in the United States:

“We were told four years ago that 17 million people went to bed hungry each night,”



said the washed-up matinee idol. “Well that was probably true. They were all on a diet.”

Reagan’s well fed, prosperous and bigoted audience laughed heartily.

By 2021, [53 million people](#) were using food banks. Millions more couldn’t afford supermarkets anymore and were [shopping at dollar stores](#) instead.

Only the people can stop Congress from cutting food stamps and other needed social programs. The AFL-CIO needs to call a new Solidarity Day to fight these vicious cutbacks.

It’s billionaire parasites like Jeff Bezos who need work requirements. Bezos should be made to clean the bathrooms in his Amazon warehouses.

And his \$500 million yacht should be seized to give homeless and other working-class children a vacation.

