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Columbus Sues Trump Administration to Protect Food Security for Thousands of Columbus Residents and Families as SNAP Benefits Set to Expire

Lawsuit challenges USDA's refusal to tap into available funds to protect food security, leaving local communities as last line of defense against hunger for 42 million Americans

COLUMBUS, OH—City Attorney Zach Klein today announced Columbus joined a coalition of local governments, charitable and faith-based nonprofits, small businesses, and workers' rights organizations to file a federal lawsuit challenging the Trump-Vance administration's unlawful suspension of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Democracy Forward and the Lawyers' Committee for Rhode Island represent the plaintiffs.

"Providing food, shelter and care to residents and families struggling to get by is one of the few fundamental duties of government. While we continue to call on Congress to get a deal done to reopen the government, we cannot allow the Trump administration to let people go hungry when there are funds available to them to meet this dire need in Columbus and across the country," said **Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein**. "This isn't about politics. It's about feeding our kids, the elderly and those struggling to find work or a good paying job."

The case challenges the U.S. Department of Agriculture's refusal to use available funds to maintain SNAP benefits during the ongoing government shutdown. These decisions threaten essential support for more than 42 million people nationwide, including 1.4 million in Ohio alone, beginning November 1.

"As elected officials, we have the opportunity to help people not just survive, but thrive," said **Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther**. "Our community is stepping up to help our neighbors, but we're sticking our fingers in the dam relative to the federal government's ability to feed our families, children and seniors in need. We need the federal government to fulfill their commitment and

make these funds available to Columbus residents, so they may stay healthy, safe and stable.”

The lawsuit argues that the Trump-Vance administration’s actions violate federal law and the Administrative Procedure Act. SNAP has long served as the nation’s first line of defense against hunger and has helped stabilize local economies during crises. Yet the administration has directed states to withhold benefits and dismantled established safeguards without authority, justification, or notice.

In Columbus, 12.8 percent of households receive SNAP benefits, totaling \$1 million each day. This includes some 29,000 school-aged children whose families often rely on SNAP as the primary or sole means by which they can afford to purchase food—or go hungry.

In response to the Trump administration’s inaction on SNAP funding, Columbus City Council this week allocated \$25,000 in emergency funding to the Mid-Ohio Food Collective, a drop in the bucket compared to the funding needed to ensure the children, elderly, veterans and low-income workers who rely on SNAP get the benefits they desperately need to put food on the table.

In addition, the City anticipates any disruption in SNAP funding could strain City budgets, divert critical resources, and hamper the City’s ability to maintain core services as it works to find solutions to fill the gaps needed to ensure thousands of households have access to food. This could impact the City’s Public Health department as families are forced to make difficult decisions between food and insurance premiums, schools as more students go to class hungry, and local businesses as the economic impact of SNAP spending dries up, just to name a few.

The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island.

Joining Columbus in this lawsuit are the cities of Albuquerque; Baltimore; Central Falls, Rhode Island; Durham, North Carolina; New Haven, Connecticut; Pawtucket, Rhode Island; and Providence, Rhode Island. The Rhode Island State Council of Churches, several other charitable and faith-based nonprofit organizations, as well as the Service Employees International Union, have also joined the fight to protect essential SNAP benefits.