



Reconciliation: Public Benefits Are Vital for Immigrant Survivors

The Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) and Alliance for Immigrant Survivors (AIS) urge Congress to protect survivors by opposing restrictions to lifesaving benefits, including for noncitizen victims currently eligible under the law.

The [Senate-passed Reconciliation bill](#) contains harmful provisions that eliminate essential safety net benefits for eligible immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and other crimes. Without access to healthcare, food assistance, and other vital benefits, many survivors would be unable to leave abusive situations and support themselves or their children. **With fewer resources, survivors and their children will be forced to remain in abusive situations longer.**

Eliminating Access to Healthcare

Eligibility for federal health benefits is already extraordinarily limited for noncitizens, and even those who are eligible may wait years to access them. The Senate-passed bill systematically block immigrant survivors' access to healthcare from every direction by:

- 1. Restricting Access to Medicaid (Sec 7110g) and Medicare (Sec 71201):** The Senate bill will eliminate eligibility for Medicaid, Child Health Insurance Program and Medicare for lawfully present asylees, refugees as well as eligible survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking.
- 2. Reducing Access to Affordable Care Act Marketplaces (Sec 71301):** The Reconciliation bill would eliminate tax credits for many lawfully present immigrants, including asylees, refugees, eligible victims of domestic violence and human trafficking, and make it nearly impossible for them to afford health insurance in Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplaces. Green card holders in the five-year Medicaid waiting period would also lose ACA eligibility (Section 71302).
- 3. Reduces the Federal Matching (FMAP) Rate From 90% to 50% to Hospitals Providing Emergency Care to Immigrants (Section 71110):** The Reconciliation bill would reduce the FMAP rate for Emergency Medicaid in states that expanded Medicaid under the ACA from 90% to 50%. Emergency Medicaid reimburses healthcare providers such as hospitals who provide emergency medical services to people who would otherwise qualify for Medicaid, but don't because of their

immigration status. The majority of Emergency Medicaid dollars fund pregnancy related healthcare services, one study found [up to 92% of Emergency Medicaid reimbursements](#) were for pregnancy related care. Reducing the FMAP benefits will shift the cost of providing care to pregnant immigrants onto states and the hospitals themselves.

Impact on survivors

Individuals who have experienced persecution, domestic violence and human trafficking [frequently need medical](#) services as they recover from victimization. Dramatically cutting access to health supports not only means the loss of access to needed services for survivors, but possibly the loss of lives due to undiagnosed or untreated medical issues.

Preserving access to these programs for survivors is key to ending cycles of violence. They provide a bridge to safety and a path to independence so that survivors never again face levels of economic hardship and isolation that are both caused by, and dramatically increase vulnerability to, abuse and exploitation.

Limiting Access to Food Assistance

The Senate-passed Reconciliation contains massive cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The proposed cuts will end food assistance for 120,000 to 250,000 people [with lawful immigration status](#), including about 50,000 children. These cuts impact eligible immigrant victims of domestic violence and human trafficking, asylees, refugees, and other vulnerable groups who qualify for SNAP under existing law.

Impact on Survivors

For victims of domestic violence and human trafficking, access to SNAP can be lifesaving. Without it, victims—including children—[may be forced to remain in abusive situations](#) due to a lack of basic resources. Abusers commonly prevent survivors from accessing or acquiring financial resources in order to [maintain power and control](#) in the relationship. Survivors may be forced to stay with abusers because they depend on them for financial support or housing. In [one study](#), 99% of domestic violence victims reported experiencing economic abuse. In [another](#), two-thirds of respondents said their abusive partner's behavior negatively impacted their educational and job training opportunities.

Nearly 80% of advocates surveyed by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence reported that "[most domestic violence victims rely on SNAP](#) to help address their basic needs and to establish safety and stability." [Reports show](#) that economic stability is crucial to survivors' health and safety, as well as the health and safety of their children. Enabling survivors to become economically self-reliant also reduces the negative economic impact on states by allowing them to support themselves, their children, and contribute to their community.

For decades, these targeted supports for eligible noncitizen victims of domestic violence and human trafficking have **received bipartisan support**¹ as a proven tool to break cycles of violence and promote independence. Preserving SNAP is not just sound - it is a matter of survival, safety, and breaking cycles of abuse that affect generations.

¹ Section 501 of IIRIRA amended PRWORA to provide that certain categories of noncitizens who have been subjected to battery or extreme cruelty in the United States by a family member with whom they reside are "qualified" for purposes of eligibility for some public benefits, [including SNAP](#). Similarly, access to benefits for [certain victims of human trafficking](#) was provided through the bipartisan Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.