**December 26, 2019**

**Federal Budget Deal Reached**

Lawmakers locked in on a [bipartisan spending deal](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1865) through two bills funding the federal government for the next nine months. H.R.1865, the vehicle for domestic programs, contains $49 billion in additional funding in the $1.4 trillion fiscal blueprint & is expected to be signed into law before the week’s end, ahead of expiration of the latest temporary federal spending resolution. The bill provides for:

* $67.886 billion in required mandatory spending for SNAP, considered full funding for the program, and for the first time, reserve funds are available for three full years to provide certainty in case of a future shutdown. It provides $6 billion in discretionary funding for WIC, which also fully funds participation this year.
* $23.615 billion in required mandatory funding – which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee – for child nutrition programs. This is $474 million above the fiscal year 2019 enacted level. The bill provides approximately $526 million for the Summer Food Service Program; $35 million for the Summer EBT program; and, $5 million for school breakfast expansion grants – the first time since 2012 the program has been funded.

Overall, the agreement is good news in averting any further government shutdowns through the federal fiscal year and providing funding at or beyond previously agreed to levels for hunger relief programs.

**SNAP Photo ID Bill Put On Hold – For Now**

Senate Bill 165, introduced by Senator Tim Schaffer (R-Lancaster) to require photos be placed on SNAP/Food Assistance Cards, was slated to be voted on by the full Senate this week but was referred back to committee. In discussing the re-referral, Senate President Larry Obhof mentioned that food banks had raised numerous issues with the bill and that he opted to therefore send it back to committee for more debate. However, the Senate President did state that he expects the bill to be considered and moved in January. While the amended version extends the rule-making timeline to allow for greater consideration of concerns, the bill does not address the numerous procedural and cost issues raised during hearings. This [Letter-to-the-Editor](https://www.dispatch.com/opinion/20170215/letter-food-stamp-fraud-overblown) Mid-Ohio Foodbank CEO Matt Habash wrote nearly two years ago still holds true in addressing issues raised about this proposal. We will keep you posted on SB165.

**ODJFS Warns against SNAP Scam**

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reports it has learned of a potential SNAP scam where some recipients have been connected to a fraudulent customer service number and were asked to provide a credit card number so that they could be charged “shipping fees” for a new Ohio Direction/EBT card. Some also were told they had won a cruise or $100 gift card and were asked for other personal information. ODJFS stresses that it "never asks customers to provide credit card numbers, and customers are not charged to replace their cards." Anyone needing assistance with their SNAP account should call 1-866-386-3071 or contact their county department of job and family services.

**Joe Burrow Raises Hunger Awareness with Heisman Speech**

Athens County native and Louisiana State University football quarterback Joe Burrow’s Heisman Award acceptance speech has led to over 11,000 people donating more than $400,000 to the Athens County Food Pantry. A [fundraiser](https://www.facebook.com/donate/478333129481591/478333149481589/) was started after Burrow’s speech included reference to poverty and hunger in Southeast Ohio. What a [wonderful campaign](https://www.thepostathens.com/article/2019/12/joe-burrow-athens-county-food-pantry-fundraiser) to witness and kudos on the recognition of need!

**Advocacy Contacts**

For questions or information, contact your advocacy team: Tim White, Advocacy Manager: (614) 317-9480 or twhite@midohiofoodbank.org; or, Marilyn Tomasi, Vice President, Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs (614) 317-9446 or mtomasi@midohiofoodbank.org. Access [advocacy resources and FAN e-blasts](https://www.midohiofoodbank.org/get_involved/advocacy/ways-to-help/) here; or, for federal advocacy information, visit the [Feeding America](http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=SPnfUrAhWwFez6hLDsvQxt6KDijlIXA%2B) and the [Food Research and Action Center](http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=yKcA9%2BRcLHlF7QVGsnEeYd6KDijlIXA%2B) (FRAC) advocacy sites. Best wishes for the New Year from your advocacy team at Mid-Ohio Foodbank!