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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AG Kaul Joins Lawsuit Challenging Trump Administration's
Illegal Demands that States Hand Over Sensitive Personal Data
of Food Assistance Recipients**

Move marks latest attempt by Trump administration to collect protected data

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul joined a coalition in filing a lawsuit challenging the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) demand that states turn over personal and sensitive information about millions of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients.

SNAP, known as "FoodShare" in Wisconsin, is a federally funded, state-administered program providing billions of dollars in food assistance to tens of millions of low-income families across the country. SNAP applicants provide their private information on the understanding, backed by long-standing state and federal laws, that their information will not be used for unrelated purposes. USDA has suggested that it could withhold administrative funding for the program if states fail to comply, causing states to choose between protecting their residents' privacy and providing critical nutrition assistance to those in need.

"Sensitive information about people shouldn't be turned over to the federal government simply because they applied for or received assistance through SNAP," said AG Kaul. "It's troubling that the federal government is working to compile this kind of information."

In a lawsuit filed Monday, AG Kaul and the coalition argue that this demand violates multiple federal privacy laws and the U.S. Constitution.

For decades, Wisconsin and other states have administered SNAP, which serves as a safety net for millions of low-income Americans by providing credits that can be used to purchase groceries for themselves and their family members. Over that period, the federal government and states have worked together to build a robust process for ensuring that only eligible individuals receive benefits. In fact, the USDA itself has described SNAP as having “one of the most rigorous quality control systems in the federal government.” Those systems do not, and have never, required that states turn over sensitive, personally identifying information about millions of Americans without meaningful restrictions on how that information is used or shared with other agencies.

Yet in May 2025, USDA made an unprecedented demand that states turn over massive amounts of personal information on all SNAP applicants and recipients, including social security numbers and home addresses, dating back five years. Even a year’s worth of SNAP recipient data contains sensitive, personal identifying information on tens of millions of individuals, including more than 934,000 in Wisconsin from 2024 alone. The federal government’s stated justifications for its unprecedented data demands, to “prevent fraud and abuse,” are directly contradicted by their own findings.

USDA’s demand is part of efforts by the federal government to collect personal information on Americans to be used to advance this president’s agenda. Since President Trump re-entered the White House in January, public reports indicate that federal officials are amassing huge databases of personal information on Americans and using that data for undisclosed purposes. The Department of Homeland Security has already obtained personal information from both the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Health and Human Services Agency, including private medical information and other personal details on Medicaid recipients.

USDA’s actions are unprecedented, threaten the privacy of millions of families, and ignore long-standing restrictions on the use and redisclosure of SNAP data. Both federal and state law prohibit Wisconsin from disclosing personally identifying SNAP data unless strictly necessary for the administration of the program, or other limited circumstances exist. Those circumstances do not exist here.

In yesterday’s lawsuit, AG Kaul and the coalition argue that these demands violate multiple federal privacy laws; fail to meet the public comment requirements for this type of action; exceed USDA’s statutory authority; and violate the Spending Clause.

The coalition asks that the court declare the Trump administration's demands unlawful and block the Trump administration from conditioning receipt of SNAP funding on states' compliance with these demands.

Joining AG Kaul in filing this lawsuit are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and the Governor of Kentucky.

A copy of the complaint is available [here](#).