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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG Kaul Sues Trump Administration, Seeking Order to Provide FoodShare Funding During Shutdown

Coalition urges court to restore SNAP funding relied upon by more than 40 million Americans, including 689,000 Wisconsinites

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul and a coalition of 22 other attorneys general and three governors today filed a [lawsuit](#) seeking to compel the Trump Administration to use emergency funds to support the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which the Administration will be unlawfully suspending amid the ongoing federal government shutdown.

SNAP, known in Wisconsin as FoodShare, helps more than 40 million Americans buy food. In Wisconsin, about 689,000 residents – including 170,000 children and 110,000 individuals over the age of 60 – receive FoodShare benefits each month. Nearly 4,500 Wisconsin retailers accept FoodShare payments.

The lawsuit argues that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be failing to use available emergency funds and suspending SNAP benefits despite the availability of contingency funds that Congress has appropriated for emergencies like this.

“Millions of Americans, including children, seniors, and veterans, are on the verge of losing access to the food assistance they rely upon,” said AG Kaul. “No one should have to go hungry because of dysfunction in our federal government.”

The lawsuit seeks a court order requiring USDA to use available emergency funds to maintain FoodShare benefits and prevent a lapse in payments. On October 10, USDA informed state SNAP agencies that if the shutdown continues, there will be

insufficient funds to pay full November benefits for the more than 40 million individuals who rely on them.

Despite USDA's claim of insufficient funds, the agency has access to SNAP-specific contingency funds appropriated by Congress for this very purpose. Furthermore, USDA has funded other programs with emergency funds during this shutdown. Its refusal to fund SNAP leaves millions of Americans without the assistance they need to buy food, while contingency funds are still available.

The lapse in SNAP payments would have serious consequences for people in need and would put additional strain on state and local governments and community organizations. Increasingly, people will turn to emergency services and local food pantries that are already struggling to meet demand. Suspending SNAP payments will also harm the grocers and merchants nationwide that accept SNAP payments. USDA has estimated that in a slowing economy, every \$1 in SNAP payment generates \$1.54 in economic activity because SNAP spending multiplies throughout the economy by supporting businesses and their employees.

While the federal government funds and sets the monthly amount of SNAP payments, states are responsible for administering the program. The coalition argues that suspending SNAP payments during a shutdown is both contrary to law and arbitrary and capricious under the Administrative Procedure Act. The coalition is also filing a motion for a temporary restraining order asking the court to immediately turn payments back on.

Joining AG Kaul in filing this lawsuit are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawai'i, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington; and the Governors of Kansas, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania.