

Matt Felix

From: Gina Murphy-Darling <gina@mrsgreensworld.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 1, 2025 2:05 PM
To: COB_mail
Subject: The Harmful Effects of HR 1

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Please accept this letter to the Board of Supervisors outlining reasons to state my opposition to HR 1 - something that will only have a negative impact on Pima County and all of its citizens.

Sincerely,
Regina Murphy-Darling

November 1, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

As a lifelong community activist working with at-risk children and families, I am writing in strong support of Pima County's efforts to protect refugee families and other vulnerable residents from the harmful effects of H.R. 1 and related reductions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Opposing this is clearly the right thing to do and serves to only **strengthen** our community and all of its citizens.

For 22 years, **Iskashitaa Refugee Network (IRN)** has worked to strengthen Tucson's food system through hands-on education, community partnerships, and sustainable local food providing initiatives that reduce food loss, food waste, and hunger. Learning from over 57 ethnic groups, Iskashitaa's approach to food security and community integration is both unique and effective. Refugees and resident asylum seekers are not only receiving food — they are actively **harvesting, gleaning, and redistributing** it to others in need through IRN. I don't know of another organization, locally or nationally, who can come close to the impact Iskashitaa has had in our community.

Each year, refugees with Iskashitaa glean between **60,000 and 150,000 pounds of backyard fruits and vegetables**, and more than **half is donated** to local food banks, shelters, and tribal partners — reaching far beyond the refugee community. This work embodies the spirit of self-reliance, contribution, and community-building that Pima County stands for.

I fully recognize that SNAP is meant to be supplemental. However, without this crucial support in their first years of resettlement, refugees struggle to meet their families' basic needs while learning English, developing marketable skills, and finding employment. The loss or reduction of SNAP benefits at this stage could severely hinder their ability to become self-sufficient and integrated members of our community. Barriers to becoming legal permanent residents (green card holders), increased eligibility requirements for SNAP benefits all increase the possibility of evictions of Pima county residents.

I urge the Board of Supervisors to take all possible actions to advocate with DES and state leadership to mitigate the impact of H.R. 1 and protect access to essential food assistance for all Pima County residents — including our newest neighbors. Please fight for them as it comes back one hundred-fold.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to a compassionate, food-secure Southern Arizona.

Sincerely,

Regina Murphy-Darling

Founder & CEO Mrs. Green's World

Matt Felix

From: William Marshall [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 3, 2025 9:00 AM
To: COB_mail
Subject: Support families in need of food assistance

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Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

I am writing in support of Pima County's efforts to protect refugee families and other vulnerable residents from the harmful effects of H.R. 1 and related reductions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

I became acquainted with **Iskashitaa Refugee Network (IRN)** through my church. They prevent waste and feed the hungry by gleaning fruits and vegetables that would otherwise go to waste. This is a prime example of what the community can do for hunger!

As a longtime pediatrician in Pima County, I know that healthy food is one of the keys for a healthy community. Please advocate for support of Ishkashita and other worthy efforts to make Pima County better.

Sincerely,

William Marshall MD
8461 E Cresthill Dr.
Tucson 85750



COB-2025-11-03-09:00 AM

Matt Felix

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 3, 2025 9:57 AM
To: COB_mail
Subject: Support for Protecting Refugee Access to Food Assistance

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Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

I am writing in strong support of Pima County's efforts to protect refugee families and other vulnerable residents from the harmful effects of reductions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Since the inception of SNAP in the 1980s legal UN refugees have always been eligible for SNAP benefits. This is because it is understood that they will usually be in entry-level jobs for up to 10 years as they learn our culture and gain job skills. They often find work in resort hotels, landscaping, and low-level restaurant work, but all those "careers" are seasonal causing undulating levels of poverty pressures.

Cutting off SNAP benefits will push refugees to decide between food and rent and then face eviction adding to the homeless population.

The UN refugee families are contributing members of the Tucson society through the Iskashitaa Refugee Network (IRN). Each year, refugees with Iskashitaa glean between 60,000 and 150,000 pounds of backyard fruits and vegetables, and more than half is donated to local food banks, shelters, and tribal partners — reaching far beyond the refugee community. This work embodies the spirit of self-reliance, contribution, and community-building that Pima County stands for. Refugees and resident asylum seekers are not only receiving food — they are actively harvesting, gleaning, and redistributing it to others in need through IRN.

We recognize that SNAP is meant to be supplemental. However, without this crucial support in their first years of resettlement, refugees struggle to meet their families' basic needs while learning English, developing marketable skills, and finding employment. The loss or reduction of SNAP benefits at this stage could severely hinder their ability to become self-sufficient and integrated members of our community.

We urge the Board of Supervisors to take all possible actions to advocate with DES and state leadership protect access to essential food assistance for all Pima County residents — including our newest neighbors.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to a compassionate, food-secure Southern Arizona.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Niethammer
Iskashitaa Refugee Network ally

Matt Felix

From: Barbara Eiswerth <eiswerth@iskashitaa.org>
Sent: Monday, November 3, 2025 12:25 PM
To: COB_mail
Cc: Christina Early
Subject: Harmful Effects of H.R.1 on Pima County refugee residents
Attachments: Iska_PimaCoBoS2025Nov2025_LOS.docx

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Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits have been supporting legally admitted UN refugees. This recognizes that refugees often begin in entry-level or seasonal jobs such as resort, landscaping, or restaurant work, while they learn English, gain marketable job skills, become literate, and adjust culturally. Cutting off SNAP benefits will force families to choose between food and rent, increasing evictions and homelessness among vulnerable populations.

The Budget Reconciliation Act (H.R. 1) marks the largest reduction to SNAP in history. While it grants tax breaks to the nation's wealthiest, it does so by reducing food support for low-income families and transferring costs to state and local governments least able to absorb them. State and local leaders can still act by ensuring equitable implementation and protecting humanitarian populations.

This change is especially harmful for refugees, asylees, and survivors of human trafficking, all here under humanitarian-based immigration statuses. Refugee families will struggle to feed their children; asylees separated from their families will face painful choices between food or immigration fees to reunite loved ones; and trafficking survivors assisting law enforcement will lose food security.

The rollout has caused unnecessary uncertainty. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has not issued guidance on noncitizen eligibility, and some states are misinterpreting H.R. 1 to mean that refugees and humanitarian immigrants must wait five years after obtaining a Green Card before qualifying for SNAP—even though the law *did not* change the federal exemption.

If this interpretation spreads, refugees in the U.S. less than five years risk falling off a “SNAP cliff” until they secure Legal Permanent Residency—a process that often takes more than a year even more than two years.

We urgently request the Board’s assistance in obtaining clear instructions from DES that can guide communication with refugee-serving organizations and affected families. Specifically, we seek:

1. Clarification from DES on SNAP eligibility for refugees and other humanitarian populations under H.R.1;
2. Transparent information on how nonprofits can become approved volunteer qualified agencies; and
3. Collaboration to ensure that local refugee-serving organizations can host meaningful, culturally appropriate volunteer placements that meet new federal work requirements.

Meeting a 20-hour/week work or volunteer requirement poses serious challenges due to barriers such as language, literacy, transportation, childcare, and cultural unfamiliarity with volunteerism. Without coordination, many willing participants may unintentionally lose benefits.

For 22 years, Iskashitaa Refugee Network has strengthened Tucson’s food system through gleaning, food rescue, and hands-on education, reducing both hunger and food waste. Refugees glean 60,000–150,000 pounds of local produce annually, half of which is donated to food banks, shelters, and tribal partners.

We urge the Pima County Board of Supervisors to stand with Iskashitaa and our partners in advocating for fair implementation of SNAP, preventing hunger, and protecting the humanitarian values that define Pima County.

In community,

Barbara Eiswerth, PhD

Executive Director

Iskashitaa Refugee Network 501(c)(3) (QCO#22664)

520.440.0100

Harvesting Hope, Empowering Change

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This text is also attached on Iskashitaa Refugee Network letterhead for your convenience.

Matt Felix

From: Ricker, Mari Anoushka - (rickerm) <rickerm@arizona.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 3, 2025 1:26 PM
To: COB_mail
Subject: SNAP for our refugee patients

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Dear Members of the Pima County Board of Supervisors,

My name is **Dr. Mari Ricker**, and I am a family medicine physician practicing in Pima County. In my clinic, Banner Family Medicine -Alvernon, I have the privilege of caring for many refugee families who have resettled here after fleeing war, persecution, and displacement. Every day, I see how their health and recovery are shaped not only by access to medical care, but also by the social determinants of health—especially food security, stable housing, and adequate income.

I am deeply concerned about the impact of H.R.1 on SNAP eligibility for my refugee patients. Many of these families arrive with little financial stability, limited English proficiency, and face barriers to employment and transportation. Most of my refugee patients work full-time in low-wage jobs and rely on SNAP benefits to provide food for their families. The upcoming termination of SNAP eligibility for refugees will have devastating consequences, ultimately forcing families to choose between food, rent, and healthcare.

I urge the Board to take action to protect food security and community health by:

- Providing emergency funding to local food banks and refugee-serving organizations to meet immediate needs.
- Supporting refugee and immigrant service organizations that offer trusted assistance with benefit navigation, legal support, and employment access.
-

Ensuring stable access to food is essential for health. I ask that you make food security and health equity a priority in upcoming policy and budget decisions.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the wellbeing of all our Pima County residents.

Sincerely,

MARI RICKER, MD, FAAFP, ABOIM
Director, Integrative Medicine in Residency
Associate Director, 3yr-MD Primary Care Accelerated Medical Pathway (PCAMP)
Professor of Family and Community Medicine

University of Arizona, College of Medicine, Tucson | Department of Family and Community Medicine
Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine
1502 E Mabel St | Tucson, AZ 85719
office: 520.626.3240
rickerm@arizona.edu
pronouns: she/her/hers

We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. The University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

Matt Felix

From: P. David Wilkinson [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 3, 2025 2:20 PM
To: COB_mail
Cc: eiswerth@iskashitaa.org
Subject: Protect & Preserve SNAP

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To: Pima County Board of Supervisors
Subject: Support for Protecting Refugee Access to Food Assistance.

Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

I am writing as the retired pastor of St. Francis in the Foothills United Methodist Church, the Church In which **Iskashitaa Refugee Network (IRN)** got its start. I am urging you to protect refugee families and other vulnerable residents from the harmful effects of **H.R. 1** and related reductions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program **SNAP**).

Over 22 years ago ISHASHITAA got its start at the Church I served for over 33 years. This valuable program has strengthened Tucson's food system by providing hands-on education, food providing initiatives that reduce food loss, food waste and hunger. I have witnessed, first hand, the effectiveness of this program and seen how it has contributed to hundreds of lives of asylum seekers, refugees and Tucson residents. Those who have benefited from ISHASHITAA's presence are not only receiving food, they are actively harvesting, gleaning, and redistributing it to others in need.

This program is responsible for gleaning between 60,000 and 150,000 pounds of backyard fruits and vegetables, over half of which is donated to local food banks, shelters and tribal partners. Their work embodies true community participation, self-reliance, and the Spirit of hope for many who have lost hope.

SNAP is a critical ingredient for those who are resettling in our community, for refugees struggling to meet basic needs and, at the same time, learning English, developing marketable skills, and finding employment.

I am urging the Board of Supervisors to take all possible actions to mitigate the impact of **H.R. 1** and to protect access to essential food assistance for all Pima County residents, including the new arrivals in our community.

Thank you for your leadership and for your compassion in creating a cooperative and food-secure Southern Arizona,

Sincerely,

The Reverend Doctor David Wilkinson, Rel.D

Matt Felix

From: Jeannette Mare [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 3, 2025 2:28 PM
To: COB_mail
Subject: Protecting Refugee Access to Food Assistance

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Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for Pima County's efforts to protect refugee families and other vulnerable residents from the harmful effects of H.R. 1 and proposed reductions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

For more than 20 years, the Iskashitaa Refugee Network (IRN) has helped build a more sustainable and equitable local food system through hands-on education, community partnerships, and practical solutions that reduce food waste and hunger. Working alongside people from over 57 cultural backgrounds, IRN has created a model of food security and community integration that is both effective and deeply human. Refugees and asylum seekers are not just receiving food — they are harvesting, gleaning, and redistributing it to others in need throughout Pima County.

Each year, refugee participants with Iskashitaa glean between 60,000 and 150,000 pounds of backyard fruits and vegetables. More than half is donated to local food banks, shelters, and tribal partners — extending far beyond the refugee community itself. This is what community looks like: people contributing their skills and effort to nourish others while building self-reliance and belonging.

SNAP is designed to be supplemental, but it is also essential. In the first years after resettlement, families are learning English, developing job skills, and adapting to a new culture and economy. Losing or reducing access to SNAP at this stage would place enormous strain on families who are working hard to rebuild their lives. It would also increase food insecurity, housing instability, and other social costs across Pima County.

I urge the Board of Supervisors to use its voice and influence with DES and state leadership to mitigate the impact of H.R. 1 and ensure that all residents — including our newest neighbors — can access the food assistance they need to thrive.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and for standing up for a compassionate, food-secure Southern Arizona.

In Kindness,

Jeannette Maré

Founder of Ben's Bells, Iskashitaa Board Member