

## ***WIC Benefits Protection Act***

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### **Background**

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children ([WIC](#)) is a federal nutrition program that provides nutritious foods to nearly 7 million pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to five years old. Nearly 40 percent of all infants in the United States benefit from WIC. It also provides education, counseling, and referrals to health care and social services.

WIC's cost-effectiveness, coupled with its ability to improve participants' quality of life, makes it one of the country's [most successful](#) federal nutrition programs. For example, WIC reduces infant mortality and low birthweight rates; increases the duration of pregnancy; helps pregnant women receive prenatal care earlier; and improves children's intellectual development, helping to prepare them for the start of school.

### **The Problem**

WIC benefits are funded through the annual appropriations process. Since the 1990s, Congress has historically provided sufficient funding to assist all eligible applicants seeking benefits with consistent bipartisan support.

However, as Republicans continue to drag out the shutdown, states, territories, and tribal organizations may be forced to pause services, leaving pregnant women and babies without access to healthy food or health services.

### **The Solution**

The *WIC Benefits Protection Act* would prevent these disruptions by making funding for the WIC program mandatory and ensuring consistent funding based on eligibility and need, rather than relying on the appropriations process. By making funding for the WIC program mandatory, this bill would provide stability for states and peace of mind for families who depend on WIC's critical support.

Every eligible mother, infant, and young child would be guaranteed benefits and services and no longer at risk of being put on waitlists or going without if there is a lapse in annual appropriations.

The [evidence](#) is clear—WIC is a lifeline for millions of women and children. The current Republican shutdown underscores the importance of providing consistent and reliable funding for WIC. The *WIC Benefits Protection Act* will ensure that no eligible family will lose access to healthy food or WIC services because of political dysfunction in Washington.