



The High Moral Stakes of the Policy Battles Raging in Washington

Appendix I The Stakes for Women and Children

In the United States, nearly [43 percent](#) of women and [almost half](#) of all children are poor or low-income. Black, Latinx, and Native women and children experience a greater proportion of these disparities.

Women and children are disproportionately affected by policy harms. Women are paid [18 percent](#) less than men. From 2023 to 2024 there was a 39 percent increase in homelessness among people in families with children, the [largest](#) single-year increase in homelessness. Children's development and girls' and women's reproductive health are especially [adversely affected](#) by toxins in their environments. At least [22 million](#) women and girls of reproductive age live in states where their reproductive health and rights have been significantly eroded. And women and children disproportionately suffer the [effects of war](#).

Policy Violence from the President and Congress

With the president's support, his allies in Congress are in the process of passing a budget that would take services away from women and children, tear immigrant families apart, and perpetuate war. The president has issued [over 100](#) harmful executive actions; frozen federal funds, including for [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) programs that will disproportionately impact women and children of all ethnicities as well as [transgender](#) women and children; and called for the elimination of programs that help women, girls, [LGBTQ+](#) children and adults, and children and adults with disabilities. Elon Musk's DOGE has slashed [thousands](#) of federal jobs and agencies, hampering the ability to administer services that women and children rely on.

Congress has begun the process for budget cuts that could:

- Deny child care for [40,000 children](#), and affect [2.4 million children's access](#) to child care and early childhood education, including cuts to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and the elimination of the Social Services Block Grant.
- Eliminate [24,000 schools, serving 12 million students](#), from free school lunch and breakfast programs, by calling for a \$12 billion cut to public schools' free and reduced meals programs.
- Endanger [health insurance for 36 million people](#) by cutting funding for Medicaid. [Nearly one in five women and almost half of all children](#) rely on Medicaid or its Children's Health Insurance Program.
- Risk hunger for [40 million recipients](#) of food stamps, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), by cutting food benefits, or eliminate all food assistance to [nine million people](#) at a time of high food prices. [Forty percent](#) of those who receive SNAP are children, [63 percent](#) of the adult beneficiaries are women, and [13.5 percent](#) of households were food insecure during some part of the year.
- These cuts to social programs will fund more tax giveaways to the wealthy, including America's 813 billionaires – 85 percent of whom are men.

President Trump and Elon Musk's DOGE have ordered actions to:

- [Cut funding](#) for National Institutes of Health (NIH) research on health disparities, including Black maternal and fetal health. NIH officials have been told to deny [funding for programs that mention “women.”](#)
- Cut [\\$11.4 billion](#) in state and community health department grants.
- Ended [birthright citizenship](#), potentially creating a group of stateless children.
- [End](#) a federal contract for legal aid to help unaccompanied children make their asylum cases in court.
- Remove longstanding policies prohibiting U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from raiding sensitive [locations](#) like schools, daycare centers, churches, and women’s shelters to conduct deportations.
- Order immigration raids and deportations that will separate families, potentially harming the [4.4 million U.S. citizen children](#) with an undocumented parent, and [850,000 undocumented minors](#).
- Provide weapons for the resumed bombing of Gaza, where [15,000 children have been killed](#) and [one million children displaced](#), and resumed U.S. bombing of Yemen, where at least 11,000 children have been killed by fighting and [one in two children](#) are severely malnourished.
- Eliminate the U.S. Agency for International Development, putting [14 million children](#) at risk of hunger and malnourishment.

Policy Violence Harms Real Women and Children

Jocely Smith is a mother of a child with disabilities. She lives, works, and volunteers in Roswell, New Mexico. In her own words:

Something is profoundly wrong when we need to say, “Thankfully, I make so little money that I can get healthcare for myself and my daughter.” What does it say about our policy priorities when we need to say, “I’m disabled, taking care of my disabled daughter, I work and I volunteer in my community, and yet I need assistance affording meals for my family?”

The programs our tax dollars pay for so that families like mine can access help when we need it for basic human needs must be more robust. Programs like SSDI shouldn’t be so [inaccessible](#). Food, housing, and health care shouldn’t be so expensive and wages so low that these basic necessities are unaffordable. And when we need help, the bar for our income shouldn’t be so low that we must be nearly destitute, without any savings or emergency cushion to qualify.

Is Congress working to make our wages higher, our rents and health care less expensive, the programs our taxpayer dollars fund more effective and accessible? No. In fact, the House’s majority budget proposal on the table is to slash [\\$880 billion from Medicaid](#). [Thirty-four percent](#) of New Mexicans rely on Medicaid. [Twenty-two percent](#) of New Mexicans rely on SNAP, yet the federal budget proposal is to cut [\\$230 billion from food assistance](#). They just passed a budget that cuts more programs and is cutting government agencies that assist with affordable housing, transportation, safety, veterans affairs, and for children with disabilities.

Why? Because they need to find at least [\\$4.5 trillion](#) to give even more tax cuts to the wealthiest and largest corporations. They are reaching into my very shallow pockets, into my daughter’s life-saving medical care, into the mouths of those who come to my food pantry table in that parking lot in downtown Roswell, and stealing from us to give to the rich. I don’t think that’s fair. Do you?

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