

Protect Key Programs in Reconciliation

The ELCA urges members of Congress to protect SNAP, Medicaid, clean energy tax credits, and education programs.

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with 2.8 million members in more than 8,500 worshipping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region.

Food Assistance

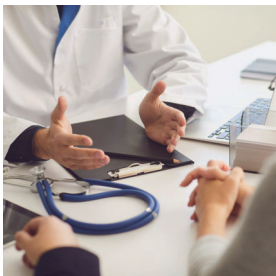
Proposed adjustments to SNAP and hunger programs could cause many low-income households to lose essential food assistance without improving their employment prospects. We are concerned by proposals to limit the Thrifty Food Plan, and to force states to shoulder benefit costs, which would hinder the future financial prospects of many families. Local food pantries and meal programs—many operated by Lutheran congregations—have indicated they are already stretched beyond capacity without any changes. **Rather than reducing food assistance, we should be strengthening these vital programs.**



"Every week I get calls from folks who need help with rental assistance and groceries. These are people who are working and are just 100 or 200 dollars short. They are already struggling... I am grateful to serve a congregation that is able to say yes most of the time, but our emergency assistance fund keeps getting emptied as the phone calls and asks increase. I am worried that with major cuts to these programs- my congregation will not be able to meet the needs of our neighbors and things will get much worse for folks who are already scraping by."

- Pastor Valenti, Faith Lutheran Church, Arlington, VA

Medicaid



Proposed Medicaid cuts would force states to either dramatically reduce coverage and services or shoulder massive new costs. Over 12 million Medicare beneficiaries rely on Medicaid for vital services like home care and family caregiver support. Lutheran hospitals and social ministry programs have long served as safety net providers in many communities, especially in rural areas. **These cuts would undermine our ability to provide quality care for those who need it most. We urge you to protect critical programs that serve as lifelines for millions of Americans.**

"I was born with a spinal cord tumor, that upon discovery when I was 29, was 5.5" long. It required three surgeries, and I had to relearn to walk 3 times. My condition is progressive and ultimately fatal. I receive Medicaid in the form of someone helping me with my home and with tasks. I use SNAP benefits to help me maintain a healthy diet. I receive clean energy assistance each year to help me heat my home during the winter."

- Lauren, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Longview, WA

Document created May 2025



Advocacy

Clean Energy

The clean energy tax credits passed under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) (Public Law 117-169) are essential. They support a transition to more sustainable energy investment and the meeting of power requirements of a growing economy. Recent research has shown the threats to the U.S. economy posed by repealing the IRA's energy tax credits include: \$336 billion in less investment over the next 15 years; 97,000 fewer American energy jobs created; and an average 10% increase in electricity bills. **We urge Congress to oppose the repeal of the IRA investments in affordable energy, American jobs, and economic development in the budget reconciliation bill.**



"Members of St. Peter's Lutheran Church [pictured above] started investigating putting solar panels on our building(s) in the Spring of 2023. After much discussion, we finally decided to move forward with the installation of solar panels and obtained congregational approval in May of 2024. A key factor in our decision was the IRA direct pay benefit of 30% of the cost which for us was \$19,040. Our solar panels were installed and became operational in October. We are currently in the process of getting an IRS issued Registration number. Once this is obtained, we can go forward with the filing of the actual forms required by the IRS to get our direct pay benefit. We are very concerned with the changes in D.C. and what implications it will have on the IRA direct pay benefit."

- Brooke, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, North Wales, PA

Education



Our commitment to education is reflected in Lutheran schools, colleges, and universities nationwide. The proposed cuts to education programs and to restructure the Pell-Grant program would harm higher education institutions, limiting opportunities for students from lower-income backgrounds. Education has long been a path to economic mobility, and reducing federal support threatens to close doors of opportunity for the next generation. **The ELCA affirms support and financial assistance to students, and urges both state and federal governments to expand grant funding for low- and middle-income students who need it most.**

"Since the 1960s, Pell Grants have enabled millions of students to receive a higher education who may not have otherwise been able to receive one. I am one of those students. I received Pell Grants when I attended St. Olaf College, a college of the ELCA, twenty years ago. In 1524, Martin Luther appealed to city governments that they establish schools, writing, 'A city's best and greatest welfare, safety, and strength consist in its having many able, learned, wise, honorable, and well-educated citizens.' Five centuries later, equitable access to quality education continues to be vital to our society, because it allows all people to utilize their abilities for the benefit of others. Every week, my colleagues who serve ELCA Campus Ministry sites are blessed to accompany talented students who rely on federal aid to finance their education. On behalf of those students, and countless others, I urge members of congress to oppose any legislation that reduces federal funding to programs that support low- and middle-income students."

- Emily, ELCA Program Director for Campus Ministry

