



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

What You Should Know

RUBEN DIAZ September 12, 2013

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Food Stamp Cuts Are Underway

You should know that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are scheduled to end on November 1st. In the United States Congress, efforts are underway to cut food stamps - \$40 billion in cuts over the next decade. One Member of Congress, Rep. Stephen Fincher (R-Tenn.) who collected nearly \$3.5 million in government farm subsidies from 1999-2012, defended his support for cutting food stamps by declaring: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."

As a pastor and as a Christian, I know that it is very dangerous to misrepresent the Bible. Congressman Fincher took a quote from the Book of Thessalonians and used it to justify hurting the less fortunate. As a New York State Senator representing the poorest area in the United States of America, I have to say that Mr. Fincher's statement disgusts me.

It is cruel to think that senior citizens who often have to decide if they should pay for medication or buy food to eat, or single moms or the disabled, or people who are underemployed and unemployed - or children - should be labeled as "unwilling to work" and therefore, shall not eat.

Although the well-fed Members of Congress and their families will not suffer under these food stamp cuts, people and families who live and work in my district here in the South Bronx will go hungry. The poor will be punished.

You should know that there are always instances of fraud or waste in almost every government program that exists, but this is not the way to curb fraud or waste. These proposed cuts to food stamps are indiscriminate and everyone who relies upon food stamps will suffer.

No one seems to want to talk about this because there is too much going on in the country. Syria and the elections and so many other things have captured our attention - but vulnerable and hungry people should not be ignored.

My dear reader, I wish there was a way to extend an invitation to Congressman Fincher to visit the South Bronx and to meet some of the families here who will be impacted by these barbaric proposals.

More importantly, I would like to challenge the Members of Congress who represent New York, the Bronx, and the South Bronx, to start some kind of National Action effort to oppose cuts in food stamps. I urge New York's Congressional delegation - especially the Black and Hispanic Members - to use the floor time they provide for you in the Congress to speak about the children and families who live and work in our communities and how they will suffer under these outrageous food stamp cuts.

I urge all of New York's Mayoral candidates during the next few weeks to use their campaigns to speak up about this issue that will affect many New Yorkers.

Ladies and gentlemen, time is not on our side. These issues are being quietly debated in the Halls of Congress this month. If enough people don't speak up, many people will suffer.

This is Senator Reverend Rubén Díaz, and this is what you should know.