

Fear of deportation drives people off food stamps in US

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Associated Press



AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews

Rosa, an undocumented immigrant who wants her last name withheld, pauses as she speaks during an interview in New York in March. Rosa who used to get about \$190 per month from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP, stopped taking benefits fearing deportation, and now gets by with the help of a local church and some family members.

provides monthly payments, typically about \$125 per eligible household member, to poor families to buy essential staples. Going without can be an extreme decision, advocates say.

"This means less food in the table, fewer meals in houses where the kids have rights because they are U.S. citizens," said Andrew Hammond, an attorney for Chicago's Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law.

It is not possible to determine the extent of the phenomenon. The number of food stamp recipients has declined as the U.S. recovers from the Great Recession and people could drop out for various reasons.

A 52-year-old woman interviewed in New York City, who is in the country illegally, told The Associated Press she was motivated in January to drop a benefit that was supporting her teenage daughter, a U.S. citizen, purely because she

condition of anonymity and was introduced to AP through a local nonprofit. She normally earns about \$350 per week answering phones at a travel agency but has been working extra hours cleaning homes to make up for the loss of about \$150 per month in food stamps.

Mark Krikorian, a well-known advocate for reducing immigration to the U.S., said their situation reflects the fact that many people who come to the country lack the skills to earn enough money here. "It is an attempted moral blackmail to say 'If you Americans don't give me your money, I can't stay here and feed my children,'" he said. "Well, it's your choice. No one made you sneak into the United States."

3.9 million children

About 3.9 million citizen children living with non-citizen parents received food stamps in the 2015 fiscal year, the most recent available data, according to the Department of Agriculture, which administers the food stamp program.

The Department of Agriculture says a lower percentage of noncitizens who qualify for the program known as SNAP have historically used the benefit than citizens because of an incorrect perception that it could affect their immigration status or hurt their chances of becoming a U.S. citizen.

"It is important for non-citizens to know they will not be deported, denied entry to the country, or denied permanent status because they apply for or receive SNAP benefits," the agency says on its website.

Driving the most recent

fears about the program is an increase in immigration enforcement.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested nearly 40 percent more people suspected of being in the country illegally in the first 100 days under Trump than in the same period a year earlier. The agency said nearly 75 percent of them had been convicted of criminal offenses but "non-criminal arrests" were up by more than 150 percent.

Immigrant advocates see the aversion to food stamps as a reflection of a climate of fear that drives people in the country illegally deeper underground, which in some cases also makes them reluctant to report crimes.

"We should care if people are afraid to interact with institutions that all of us rely on for our health and well-being," said Tanya Broder, senior attorney at the National Immigration Law Center.

NEW YORK — A crack-down on illegal immigration under President Donald Trump has driven some poor people to take a drastic step: opt out of federal food assistance because they are fearful of deportation, activists and immigrants say.

People who are not legal residents of the U.S. are not eligible to take part in what is formally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

But many poor families include a mix of non-legal residents and legal ones, such as children who have citizenship because they were born in the U.S. In those cases, it is often an adult who is not a legal resident who submits the application.

Some now feel that is too dangerous under a president who has made immigration enforcement a priority. Throughout the U.S., there are accounts of people resisting efforts of nonprofit organizations to sign them up for food stamps, letting benefits lapse or withdrawing from the program because of the perceived risk.

"They don't want to put their name and address on a form for a government public benefit out of fear that they'll be sought out and asked to leave," said Teresa Smith, executive director of Catholic Charities of Orange County, California.

'Less food'

The food stamp program

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Islamic State claims stunning attack in heart of Iran

TEHRAN, Iran — The Islamic State group claimed responsibility today for a pair of stunning attacks on Iran's parliament and the tomb of its revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, which killed at least 12 people and wounded more than 40.

The bloodshed shocked the country and came as emboldened Sunni Arab states — backed by U.S. President Donald Trump — are hardening their stance against Shiite-ruled Iran.

In recent years, Tehran has been heavily involved in conflicts in Syria and Iraq against the Islamic State, but had remained untouched by IS violence around the world. Iran has also battled Saudi-backed Sunni groups in both countries.

Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard indirectly blamed Saudi Arabia for the attacks. A statement issued today stopped short of alleging direct Saudi involvement but called it "meaningful" that the attacks followed Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia, where he strongly asserted Washington's support for Riyadh.

The statement said Saudi Arabia "constantly supports" terrorists including the Islamic State group, adding that the IS claim of responsibility "reveals (Saudi Arabia's) hand in this barbaric action."

The "spilled blood of the innocent will not remain unavenged," the Revolutionary Guard statement said.

Senators to ask about Trump pushback on Russia investigation

WASHINGTON — A day before a Senate panel hears former FBI Director James Comey's first public account of his dramatic firing, lawmakers will question senior members of President Donald Trump's national security team about surveillance law and are expected to ask whether the president has tried to influence ongoing investigations into Russia's election meddling and possible coordination with the Trump campaign.

Two of the four national security executives scheduled to testify before the Senate intelligence committee today were reportedly asked by Trump to publicly state that there was no evidence of collusion between Moscow and the Trump campaign. Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats has declined to answer questions about this publicly. And House Armed Services committee lawmakers did not raise the issue when National Security Agency Director Adm. Mike Rogers recently appeared before a subcommittee hearing on cyber issues.

The back-to-back hearings come as the White House grapples with the fallout from Comey's firing, which led to the appointment of a special counsel to take over the Russia investigation in an effort to prevent even the appearance of Oval Office interference.

Russia's role in the 2016 presidential election, and ensuing congressional and FBI investigations into Moscow's ties with Trump associates has dogged the president since he took office.

White House officials had weighed trying to block Comey from testifying on Thursday by arguing that his discussions with the president pertained to national security and that there was an expectation of privacy. However, officials ultimately concluded that the optics of taking that step would be worse than the risk of letting the former FBI director testify freely.

White House looks for ways to undermine Comey's credibility

WASHINGTON — With fired FBI Director James Comey's highly anticipated congressional testimony just a day away, the White House and its allies are scrambling for ways to offset potential damage.

Asked Tuesday about the testimony, President Donald Trump was tight-lipped. "I wish him luck," he told reporters.

Comey's testimony Thursday before the Senate intelligence committee could expose new details regarding his discussions with Trump about the federal investigation into Russia's election meddling.



Fars News Agency/Omid Vahabzadeh

A man hands a child to a security guard from Iran's parliament building after an assault of several attackers, in Tehran, Iran, today. Suicide bombers and gunmen stormed into Iran's parliament and targeted the shrine of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on Wednesday, killing a security guard and wounding several other people in rare twin attacks, with the siege at the Legislature still underway.

Comey could also bring up other aspects of his dealings with the Trump administration. On Tuesday evening a person familiar with the situation said Comey had told Attorney General Jeff Sessions that he did not want to be left alone with Trump.

The person, who was not authorized to discuss the matter by name and spoke on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press the comment was made because of concerns Comey had about Trump.

Woman accused of leak made pro-climate, anti-Trump posts

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Before she was charged with leaking U.S. government secrets to a reporter, Reality Leigh Winner shared sometimes scathing opinions on President Donald Trump and his policies for the whole world to see.

The 25-year-old U.S. government contractor has worked since February in Augusta, Georgia, for a federal agency that neither prosecutors nor her defense lawyer will name and where she had access to sensitive documents. But the secretive nature of her job didn't stop Winner from speaking freely on politics and other topics on social media accounts accessible to anyone.

She posted on Facebook three months ago that climate change is a more important issue than health care "since not poisoning an entire population seems to be more in line with 'health' care, and not the disease care system that people voted for a soulless ginger orangutan to 'fix.'"

Winner remained locked up Tuesday on federal charges that she made copies of classified documents containing top-secret material and mailed them to an online news organization. She was scheduled to appear before a federal judge Thursday for a detention hearing.

In her spare time, Winner lifted weights and taught the occasional yoga class. She served six years in the Air Force before she moved to Georgia early this year, according to her mother, Billie Winner-Davis. Reporters gathered Tuesday outside Winner's small, red-brick home in a neighborhood dotted with overgrown yards and houses in disrepair.

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A: For the majority of patients concerned about their dental health this is a reasonable interval. However, for many patients who struggle with plaque control, have poor brushing habits, inadequate diets, smokers, and patients with medical conditions such as diabetes a more frequent cleaning interval is recommended and appropriate. And yes, there are the few patients out there who do an amazing job of home care and can remain healthy on just an annual cleaning visit and checkup. Remember "you only have to brush and floss the teeth you want to keep!"



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A: Be aware that this scan will take 30 minutes or more to run, and you cannot use your computer while it is running. Visit Avast.com, and install the program.

After installation, click on "Protection", then "Anti-Virus", then "Other Scans", then "Boot-Time Scan", then "Install Specialized Definitions", then "Run on Next PC Reboot." During the scan, if prompted what to do with found viruses, select #2, remove or quarantine found items.



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Q: Should I buy a new box spring/foundation when purchasing a new mattress?

A: Yes, you should always buy the matching foundation with the purchase of a new mattress, unless the bed you are putting it on is a solid platform design. All mattress manufacturers have a clearly defined limitation built in to their warranty requiring a proper support surface for the mattress.

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Q: What is the Birthstone for June?

A: I am Pearl, the gemstone of lovers. The lovelorn have used me in their potions for centuries. Embrace me while you slumber and I will weave your dreams into true romances. I protect innocence and symbolize purity. Pearls are a traditional gift for brides and celebration of the 3rd and 30th anniversaries. There are many colors of Pearls, shapes and sizes.

Alexandrite is also a birthstone for June and gemstone for the 55th anniversary.



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Q: I bent over and my back went out!

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