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Vaccines Save Lives and Protect Future Health

Rejecting the misinformation

and the fear

BY MARIAN WRIGHT **E**DELMAN

I've never forgotten family's sadness over the senseless death

of my childhood neighbor little eases like tetanus, polio and mea-Johnny Harrington, who lived three houses down from our church parsonage in segregated Bennetts-

hard-working grandmother had no seeing more and more outbreaks

against preventable dis-

ing tetanus infection because his parents. How can it be that we are must be stopped.

doctor to advise her nor the mon- of a disease declared eliminated ey to pay for health care. Over the in the United States nearly two delast four decades the Children's cades ago? The answer involves a Defense Fund has fought web of linked factors: the spread alongside many others of misinformation and falsehoods champion policies by a small but vocal number of and programs that work vaccine opponents, gaps in vacto ensure every child in cination coverage, and a national America gets vaccinated and global increase in outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases.

The U.S. has already recorded well over 1,000 cases of measles Yet in 2019 headlines like this year—most of them occur-"New U.S. measles cases break ring in children. As we explain ville, S.C. Johnny stepped on a 25-year-old record" are creating in a new brief, this growing crisis rusted nail and died of the result- fear and worry, especially among is putting our children at risk and

The facts are simple: Vaccines the world. are safe. They are highly effective. They are supported by every major American medical society and government agency and are a routine part of pediatric care. Yet the growing number of outbreaks suggests more must be done to support immunization and halt the spread of serious—and potentially deadly—diseases. The bottom line is that to stop the spread of measles and other serious diseases, parents must have access to factual information from trusted sources to combat fraudulent information spread by the anti-vaccination movement in the U.S. and around

To ensure that parents are equipped with the facts, health care providers, educators, children's groups, policymakers and faith leaders must be vocal advocates for vaccinations, and policies must support vaccination and limit exemptions only to those with legitimate medical reasons.

Why are vaccines so important? Vaccines save lives and protect against long-term health consequences. They reduce disability and suffering, contribute to longer life expectancy, and help lower

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Food Stamps Helped Me Get Back on My Feet

Cutting them is a

lose-lose

BY JILL RICHARDSON

The Trump administration has proposed a rule that will cut an estimated 3 million eligible

people off food stamps while depriving half a million eligible children of school lunch.

I've been on food stamps.

I spent most of my life with mental illness, and it was not diagnosed until a few years ago. Not knowing there was a reason everything was so difficult for me, I pushed myself until I could push no more.

I got good grades in school, and went to college on a scholarship. I got my degree and then got a full-time job like I thought I was supposed to.

I began getting severe migraines every day at the age of 14. That was my body telling me that I was doing more than I could handle and I needed to stop and heal. I had a migraine every day for 23 years. Working was hellish and painful, and I still tried.

When I could no longer handle an office job, I tried being self-employed and working from home. I could never make enough to really get by on. Then I went on food stamps. It didn't mean I could stop working. I got \$70 a month so I could eat, but I still had to pay rent and put gas in my car, and for that, I worked.

Food stamps did its job for me. It helped me get through a tough time until I could get back on my own two feet.

I'm fortunate I didn't have children. If I did, my kids would have suffered through my financial insecurity through no fault of their own. But food stamps and school lunch would have helped ensure they had a chance in life despite being born to a mom too sick to make ends meet.

While the moral righteousness of food stamps justifies the program on its own, there are other benefits to it as well.

Food stamps are a huge stimulus to the economy. Families spend their SNAP benefits to buy food from local businesses like grocery stores, and that creates jobs — from the store clerk stocking the shelves, to the truck driver transporting the food, to the farmers and ranchers producing the food.

For every \$5 the U.S. government spends on food stamps, it generates \$9 in economic activity. That's an incredibly effective stim-

Federal school breakfast and lunch programs do more than help food security too - they help kids succeed. Imagine trying to pay attention or take a test while you're hungry. School breakfast and lunch helps kids from low income families break the cycle of poverty when they grow up, because it helps them benefit more from their education.

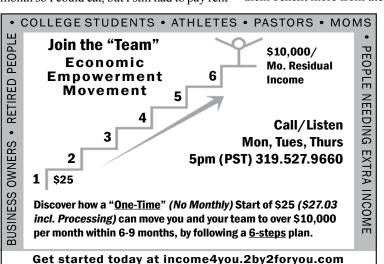
The movement to cut low-income people who are eligible for food stamps and school lunch off of those programs isn't just immoral, it's short-sighted.

The Trump administration claims the measure will save money because there will be less federal spending on helping hungry people eat. In addition to the cruelty of "saving money" by taking food from the hungry, it will also ultimately harm the nation by

removing the economic stimulus that food stamps provide and making it that much harder for half a million already poor kids to do well in school.

Forcing kids to go hungry is a lose-lose. OtherWords columnist Jill Richardson is pursuing a PhD in sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She's currently based in Montana. Distributed by Other-Words.org.





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