

'It's going to be devastating'

Conn. food nutrition programs, staff in jeopardy after federal funding slashed

By Natasha Sokoloff
STAFF WRITER

The passage of President Donald Trump's broad spending bill has put nutrition education programs and their staff across Connecticut in jeopardy, with funding abruptly slashed and the future

uncertain. "This bill could be the end of us," said Jennifer McGarry, the program founder and director of UConn Husky Nutrition & Sport, one of the five agencies that receives federal funds to implement SNAP-E

out." In fiscal year 2025, Connecticut received approximately \$4.6 million for SNAP-E, the educational component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. However, the huge package of

tax and spending cuts passed by Congress in early July, dubbed the "big, beautiful bill," completely eliminates federal funding for SNAP-E, or the National Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program, beginning Oct. 1, and reduces SNAP funding.

SNAP-E program directors in Connecticut are now scrambling to come to terms with what will happen. **Food continues on A4**



Christian Abraham/Hearst Connecticut Media

SNAP-E programs in Connecticut aim to increase access to healthy foods through nutrition education and community outreach.



Courtesy of Renae Cote

Renae Cote, of Cromwell, who runs Frostin Farms, tends to hundreds of fruit plants of some 75 varieties in her quarter-acre backyard. She will be donating fruit to the food pantry, as well as propagating free plants to residents to encourage them to grow their own food. Here, Cote stands next to her new Santa Rosa plum tree.

'My love letter for Cromwell'

Farmer shares berries, fruit tree buds to repay neighbors for charity during hard times

By Cassandra Day
STAFF WRITER

CROMWELL — Small farmer Renae Cote, an entrepreneur who ran a half-dozen companies prior to the pandemic, said the local food pantry was a godsend

during the pandemic when all the businesses "crashed" and her family fell on hard times. Cote had a marketing software company, another that offered website building, a shop in Berlin selling baby products she eventu-

ally sold, and others. The COVID-19 outbreak drastically changed that, she explained. "All the big companies went online" and "squeezed" her companies to "nonexistence." When visiting the town's food bank for the first time,

"I fell to my knees sobbing uncontrollably," said Cote, who had seven people living in her home at the time. "I never thought I'd be in that place," she said. "It was humbling, but I was also so grateful because the people" **Farm continues on A6**

Warmer summer nights raise health concerns

By Dan Amarante
NEWSROOM METEOROLOGIST

Growing up in Connecticut, I have not-so-fond childhood memories of attempting to sleep with the windows open on a hot summer night, tracking the subtle relief of the oscillating fan's breeze like a spectator at a tennis match. Summers have since become hotter and more humid, with overnight lows rising by more than two degrees on average since 1990. Summer nights have been heating up over the last few decades in Connecticut due to a warming climate and the influence of urban heat island effects. So far in 2025, we're on pace for the third-warmest summer of low temperatures out of 121 years of record-keeping in the Hartford area. Expanding to overall day/night temperatures, eight out of the top 10 warmest summers on record have occurred in the last 20 years. Globally, 2.4 billion people experienced an average of at least 2 additional weeks per year where nighttime temperatures exceeded 77 degrees, according to analysis from Climate Central. In addition to the overall warming of our summer nights, the number of unbearable nights in Connecticut is becoming more frequent. In the Hartford area from 1940 to 1980, the total number of nights with a low temperature of 75 degrees or warmer was two. Two nights total over a 40-year span. So far in 2025, it has already happened thrice (through July 21), and in 2024 it happened seven times. **Warmer continues on A4**

Lawmakers demand Afghan interpreter's release

By Joshua Eaton
STAFF WRITER

An Afghan interpreter named Zia fled his country and moved to Connecticut last year because he feared torture — or worse — from Taliban forces he

had helped the United States fight in Afghanistan, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal told reporters at a press conference Tuesday. But, Zia was arrested by federal immigration authorities last week and now faces possi-

ble deportation to Afghanistan. "Where in the world are you safer than in America?" Blumenthal, a Democrat from Connecticut, asked Tuesday. "As it turns out, he was totally unsafe because of this administration. Again, this cause should be bi-

partisan." Blumenthal and other Democratic lawmakers gathered with advocates and Zia's immigration lawyer Tuesday on a virtual press conference to call attention to his case and criticize what Blumenthal described as

an "abhorrent violation of basic decency." The U.S. Department of Homeland Security — which oversees both ICE and USCIS — said Tuesday Zia "is currently under investigation for a se-" **Zia continues on A6**

Lenny & Joe's Fish Tale

OUR CHARITY CAROUSEL IS OPEN DAILY

Bring the Kids for a Ride • Enjoy our Fresh Seafood!

Open Daily 1 to 7 pm at the Madison Restaurant • Weather Permitting

100% of all Ride money is donated to local Charities

Westbrook

86 Boston Post Rd

860-669-0767

1301 Boston Post Rd

203-245-7289

www.ljfishtale.com