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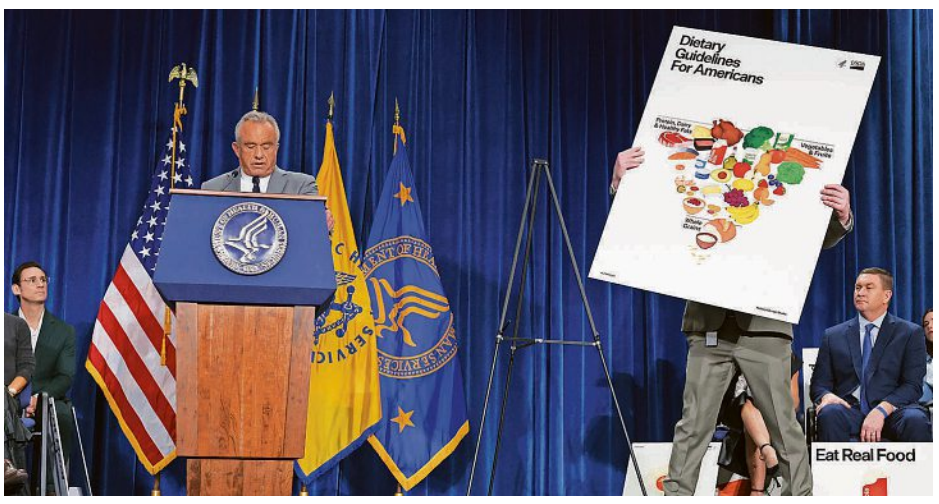
ANALYSIS

Trump funding cuts axed nutrition program

SNAP-Ed taught people how to identify healthy food patterns, keep food safe and navigate a complex food environment. It also taught low-income Americans how to improve their budgeting and planning for meals that balance cost and nutrition. GETTY IMAGES

SNAP-Ed saved money, helped Americans eat healthier

Diane Cress
Wayne State University
THE CONVERSATION



Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and the Make America Healthy Again movement have embraced a core principle: Healthy habits prevent chronic disease. Yet the Trump administration stopped funding SNAP-Ed, which helped boost health in at-risk communities.
ANNA MONEYMAKER/GETTY IMAGES

If the government had found a way to save $10 for every dollar it spent helping low-income people get healthier, wouldn't it make sense for it to keep doing that?

Well, that's exactly what the U.S. government did when it piloted the SNAP-Ed program in 1977. This U.S. Department of Agriculture program persisted for nearly 50 years until the Trump administration shuttered it in 2025.

SNAP-Ed served as the nutrition education arm of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which helps more than 40 million Americans buy groceries.

SNAP-Ed complemented SNAP by teaching people who get those benefits how best to use that government assistance. It paid for nutrition educators to teach lessons at schools, community centers and university extension offices. The educators led grocery store tours, taught label reading and budget comparisons, and taught cooking classes. And they offered a mix of printed and online resources to support good nutrition in the home.

While the federal government fully funded the program, the states, along with Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico, administered and implemented SNAP-Ed through local community programs, often partnering with nonprofits. It cost only one penny for every SNAP dollar spent, and it worked.

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How to read ruling on conversion therapy

About half of states ban the practice

BrieAnna J. Frank
USA TODAY

How big of an impact will the U.S. Supreme Court's March 31 ruling on speech-based conversion therapy have on the First Amendment? That will depend on how states across the nation have drafted their laws regulating the practice, legal experts say.

In an 8-1 ruling, the Supreme Court sided with a therapist challenging Colorado's ban on the therapy, agreeing that the Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals should have applied a stricter constitutional test to evaluate the law.

The court sent the case back to the appeals court to be reconsidered under the tougher First Amendment test, which it is unlikely to pass. Under strict scrutiny, the government has to prove that a restriction on speech is narrowly tailored to protect a compelling interest, which is generally preventing harm to an individual or the public at large, according to the Freedom Forum.

Colorado's Minor Conversion Therapy Law, which went into effect in 2019, defines conversion therapy as attempts to "change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity, including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attraction or feelings toward individuals of the same sex."

"Colorado may regard its policy as essential to public health and safety. Certainly, censorious governments throughout history have believed the same," Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote in the majority opinion. "But the First Amendment stands as a shield against any effort to enforce orthodoxy in thought or speech in this country."

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson was the only one to dissent, writing that the First Amendment does not bar a state from "prevent[ing] its licensed talk therapists from using speech to harm the minors in their care."

Alliance Defending Freedom, which represented therapist Kaley Chiles in the case, welcomed the ruling in a virtual news conference March 31.

Jim Campbell, the organization's chief legal counsel, called it a "decisive win for free speech," while Chiles said she hopes the ruling "fuel[s] a greater pursuit of truth, both amongst the

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