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Food banks will feel fallout for months



When the USDA announced in late October that there would be no SNAP benefits in November, it was the first time federal food aid had not arrived in the program's more than 60-year history. GARY C. KLEIN/SHEBOYGAN PRESS

Many Americans used up reserves during closure

Sarah D. Wire
USA TODAY

The Missoula Food Bank & Community Center in Montana doubled its food order for the first two weeks of November to help handle a flood of requests

and will spend "far and above" more than what its has budgeted this month, said Executive Director Amy Allison. A half-dozen other food banks across the country have similar stories: They've carved massive holes in their budgets over the past six weeks as they've tried to keep up with demand sparked by the federal government shutdown. It hit at the same time layoffs and rising prices had already

boosted the number of people seeking help. And now they're facing the rest of the year having already pleaded with every donor on their list to give as much as possible. "The fallout is going to be huge, and I don't think we can even really wrap our heads around that yet," Allison said.

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New MA license plate could be a hit

Margie Cullen
USA TODAY NETWORK - New England

A new specialty license plate is exploding in popularity in Massachusetts and could soon take the top crown for registrations in the state. The Massachusetts 250 Years of Independence plate, a blue plate featuring the year "1776" and the number "250," only became available in May yet, as of Nov. 7, has 31,526 active registrations. This puts it just behind the "Cape Cod & Islands" plate, which was introduced 29 years ago in 1996 and has about 33,000 active registrations. This is quite a change from late May, when the Cape Cod & Islands plate led the next most popular plate in Massachusetts (the Right Whale plate) by 13,000 registrations, and even from mid-October, when the Massachusetts 250 plate had 24,400 registrations, according to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

What is the Massachusetts 250 plate?

The Massachusetts 250 plate is part of the Massachusetts 250 festivities, celebrating 250 years of America's independence and Massachusetts' revolutionary legacy. "There is so much to celebrate about our state's role in the founding of our nation and the ways in which Massachusetts has continued to lead with our revolutionary values of freedom and liberty for all," said Governor Maura Healey in a statement when the

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ACA subsidies could reshape midterms

Nathan Layne
REUTERS

BECKLEY, WV – For Larry Jackson, a Donald Trump-backing Republican hoping to unseat his party's incumbent in a West Virginia congressional primary next year, the fight in the U.S. Congress over Affordable Care Act subsidies is both personal and political ammunition. Jackson, 42, says steep ACA premium hikes facing West Virginians – estimated by one think tank to average nearly 400% per enrollee next year – highlight the stakes of the expiring subsidies. It's an issue he plans to spotlight in a broader cost-of-living message for his campaign to unseat Rep. Carol Miller, who has not

committed to keeping them in place. The elevation of ACA subsidies as an electoral issue among Republicans in one of the nation's most reliably conservative states a year before Americans go to the polls for midterm congressional elections underscores the issue's potential potency. Jackson, a business owner, has relied on the ACA to provide health insurance for his family of eight. Without the enhanced subsidies, due to expire at the end of December, his monthly premium is set to quadruple to \$1,850 a month. Democrats' refusal to approve discretionary funding for federal agencies until Republicans agreed to extend subsidies triggered the longest government shut-

down in U.S. history. It ended on Nov. 12 without a deal to extend them. Democrats are expected to campaign vigorously on the hikes as they seek to break the Republican grip on Congress in next November's elections. "These tax credits cannot expire. It's going to hurt a lot of people in West Virginia," Jackson told Reuters. "We can all agree there are problems with the Affordable Care Act, but the government needs to extend these credits as they work that out." The subsidies, introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, expanded federal assistance for Americans seeking health

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Larry Jackson, a candidate in the Republican primary for West Virginia's first congressional district, plans to spotlight Affordable Care Act premium hikes facing West Virginians during his campaign. NATHAN LAYNE/REUTERS

Rates are down, and the market's heating up

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