

# Lebanon Daily News

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026 | LDNEWS.COM

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## New SNAP work requirements begin



People line up to receive free food during a Thanksgiving food giveaway at Shiloh Mercy House in Oakland, California, on Nov. 24, 2025, after the temporary halt in SNAP benefits during the government shutdown worsened already high levels of food insecurity. JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES FILE

### Veterans and homeless people no longer exempt

**Mary Walrath-Holdridge**

USA TODAY

Nearly 42 million low-income Americans on the Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program must now adhere to increased work requirements, major changes that took effect Feb. 1 as part of President Donald Trump's law

known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

The United States' largest nutrition assistance program has been a funding flash point for the second Trump administration, taking center stage during the 43-day 2025 government shutdown when the U.S. Department of Agriculture said in October that it would not pay the next month's benefits.

The bill that ended the shutdown restored funding for the program after a series of lawsuits filed by states challenged payment pauses, eligibility requirements and requests from the federal government for sensitive citizen data. Even so, the budget bill Congress

adopted and Trump signed in July had already included major changes to the program, including tightened work requirements and billions in funding cuts.

Advocates say the tightened parameters of a program that already had work requirements will result in more Americans falling through the cracks.

"You just have to wonder what the administration is trying to accomplish by removing protections that have been in place to ensure that the most

See SNAP, Page 2A

## Supreme Court asked to weigh in on begging

Lower courts say bans violate First Amendment

**Maureen Groppe**  
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Two years after the Supreme Court said cities can punish homeless people for sleeping in public places, Alabama wants the high court to end protections for public begging.

The constitutional issues are different. In 2024, the court said fining or jailing someone for sleeping outside when there are no available shelter beds doesn't violate the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment. In Alabama's pending appeal, the state argues begging was widely criminalized at the start of the nation and so it should not be protected speech under the First Amendment.

While the legal strategy may be a long shot, Alabama hopes the justices will want to hear its appeal for one of the same reasons an Oregon city's sleeping ban was taken up: local governments' pleas for help with the nation's growing homelessness problem.

"Our cities cannot manage this crisis without the full measure of their traditional police powers," Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall told the court in an appeal backed by 19 GOP attorneys general from other states.

Alabama has asked the court to decide whether the Constitution prevents broad bans on panhandling, such as two Alabama laws successfully challenged so far by Jonathan Singleton, an unhoused resident of

See BEGGING, Page 2A

## Flu season gets worse as 'second peak' looms

**Eduardo Cuevas**

USA TODAY

The United States isn't out of a severe flu season yet as more children are getting infected.

Cases across the country had appeared to decline before the latest U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data on Jan. 30 showed upticks in infections.

"We are heading up a second peak of flu season," said Caitlin Rivers, a Johns Hopkins University epidemiologist who writes the "Force of Infection" newsletter. The country saw its first peak right around the New Year, followed by a couple weeks of declines, she added.

"Now, unfortunately, we're seeing increases again, particularly in school-age children," Rivers said. And as chil-

dren and teens become infected, flu then spreads in households, causing upticks in cases.

Flu season is typically in the fall and winter, though could last longer. Experts note it can be notoriously hard to predict how a flu season will unfold.

So far, the CDC estimated there have been at least 20 million illnesses, 270,000 hospitalizations and 11,000 people have died from flu so far this season. Children under 18 years old had the highest peak weekly hospitalization rate since the 2010-2011 season, CDC said.

"We're not out of the flu winter yet," said Dr. William Schaffner, professor of infectious diseases at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville.

See FLU SEASON, Page 2A



Beyond flu shots, people should avoid people who are coughing and sneezing, which is how flu spreads. GETTY IMAGES

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Volume 154 | No. 124  
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