

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

Louisiana Lawmakers, Advocates, and Residents Push Back on SNAP Cuts



Rep. Jason Hughes
(District 100)



Rep. Delisha Boyd
(District 102)



Sen. Royce Duplessis
(District 5)

Louisiana Families and Food Banks Brace for Impact

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Louisiana Families and Food Banks Brace for Impact



Louisiana State Legislators, including Rep. Jason Hughes (District 100), Rep. Delisha Boyd (District 102), and Sen. Royce Duplessis (District 5), say the recent “Big Beautiful Bill” and its SNAP benefit cuts will hurt the state’s most vulnerable, and they’re working to prevent that harm.

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief Data News Weekly

Overview of the Legislation

A newly passed federal spending bill, dubbed the “Big, Beautiful Bill” by former President Donald

Trump, has ignited concern across Louisiana and beyond. The legislation slashes over \$186 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), significantly altering the landscape of food security in the United States. In states like Louisiana, where poverty rates remain high and reliance on Federal Food Assistance is widespread, the

consequences are expected to be severe.

The bill introduces stricter work requirements, narrows eligibility criteria, and shifts financial responsibility for the program to individual states. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Louisiana would need to raise at least \$238 million annually to sustain current SNAP benefit levels for its residents.

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Please call 504-309-9913 for subscription information or to obtain a back issue of the paper ONLY.
Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

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Local Food Banks Strained by Increased Demand

In New Orleans, organizations like Second Harvest Food Bank are already seeing signs of strain. CEO John Sillars voiced serious concern about the rising need for emergency food assistance.

"We anticipate that more people will come to us," Sillars said. "It's going to be tough because we're doing more than ever, but we are unable to fill the gap if SNAP access is reduced. For every one meal we provide, SNAP provides nine."

Sillars also criticized the bill's elimination of SNAP-Ed, a nutrition education initiative aimed at helping low-income families make healthier food choices.

"It teaches people how to eat healthily," he explained. "They're not going to be eating those preservatives; they're not going to be eating as much salt and sodium. Taking that away hurts more than people realize."

Families Face Tough Decisions

For families who rely on SNAP, the cuts are already forcing difficult



conversations.

Angela, a 34-year-old single mother in New Orleans East, described the challenge of trying to make ends meet.

"Without SNAP, I don't know what we're going to do. I work part-time and go to school. They say I don't work enough hours. But I'm doing everything I can."

David, a disabled veteran in Gentilly, expressed a sense of betrayal.

"I served my country. Now I'm living on a fixed income, and I need SNAP to survive. Groceries are already expensive. I don't understand why they're taking this from people

like me."

Lawmakers Speak Out

Local and state officials are pushing back, voicing strong opposition to the federal cuts.

Rep. Delisha Boyd (D-New Orleans) called the legislation:

"A direct attack on our most vulnerable communities. Alongside expanding food access and housing support, we must also pursue other local measures to ease the burden. Our partnership with Congressman Troy Carter, a proven champion for equity and working families, remains key as we fight for the re-

sources our communities deserve."

Rep. Jason Hughes was more blunt: "There is absolutely nothing 'beautiful' about President Trump's Big Ugly Bill. It's a clear and direct attack on our low-income and working-class residents. Cutting SNAP benefits is frankly disgraceful and inhumane."

State Senator Royce Duplessis also condemned the cuts, emphasizing the long-term harm to Louisiana families.

"The proposed federal cuts are deeply concerning and will hit Louisiana's most vulnerable residents the hardest, especially children, se-

niors, and working families already struggling with food insecurity. We must act urgently at the state and local level to fill the gap by expanding food assistance programs, strengthening partnerships with food banks, and investing in job training and livable wages. No one in Louisiana should go hungry because of decisions made in Washington."

A Community in Crisis

While political leaders debate policy and budgets, families on the ground are struggling with immediate realities.

"Politicians can argue all day," Angela said, "but my kids can't eat politics."

As the new rules take effect, food banks, advocacy groups, and local agencies are mobilizing to mitigate the damage. Second Harvest is among those calling for urgent support, from both public and private sectors, to help meet the expected increase in food insecurity.

"This is not just about hunger," Sillars emphasized. "It's about whether or not people in our communities can live with basic security and dignity."

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Satchmo SummerFest 2025

Demian Roberts
Photographer

The 2025 Satchmo SummerFest brought the Spirit of Louis Armstrong to life with a weekend full of vibrant music, cultural celebration, and community pride. Thousands gathered at the New Orleans Jazz Museum to honor the City's Most Iconic Musical Son with jazz, brass, and soul echoing through the French Quarter.

From the lively main stage performances to intimate seminars exploring Armstrong's Legacy, the festival offered something for everyone. Food vendors served up classic New Orleans dishes, while second lines paraded through the crowd, keeping the energy high all weekend. This year's event also marked the 125th Anniversary of Armstrong's birth, with Special Tributes woven throughout the program.

Families, locals, and tourists alike danced, learned, and celebrated together, united by the enduring impact of Satchmo's music and message.

The festival once again proved why it's a summertime favorite and a cornerstone of New Orleans culture.



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events.

Hall of Famer Eric Allen Gives Nod to New Orleans and the Who Dat Nation

Eric Connerly
Data News Weekly Contributor

When Eric Allen took the stage in Canton to reflect on his 14-Season NFL Career, he didn't forget about New Orleans. While most fans associate Allen with his standout years in Philadelphia or his later success in Oakland, he made it a point to show love to the New Orleans Saints, a team that played a meaningful role in his journey.

Allen came to New Orleans in 1995, bringing veteran experience and leadership to a team in transition. After seven strong seasons with the Eagles, he quickly established himself as a reliable force in the Saints' secondary. In his three years wearing the Black and Gold, Allen tallied five interceptions and earned respect for his professionalism both on and off the field.

During his Hall of Fame Enshrinement Speech, Allen took time to rec-



During his Hall of Fame induction, Eric Allen gave a heartfelt shoutout to the New Orleans Saints and the Who Dat Nation, honoring their role in his NFL journey.

ognize the organization that welcomed him. "I want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Benson for the opportunity to join the Saints and play in the great City of New Orleans," he said. "I truly appreciate you guys giving me the opportunity to wear that jersey."

Though his time in New Orleans didn't include a playoff run, Allen's presence in the locker room made a lasting impact. He helped mentor younger players, set the tone on defense, and embraced the city's culture as his own. Saints fans remember him not just for the plays he made, but for how he carried himself as a pro.

For the Who Dat Nation, seeing Eric Allen take his rightful place in the Pro Football Hall of Fame as a proud moment. His time in New Orleans may have been just one chapter of his career, but it was one filled with leadership, heart, and gratitude, everything this city values in a Saint.

Newsmaker

Smoove Fest



Smooove Fest Brings the Beat to New Orleans, Celebrating Local Talent and Hip-Hop Legacy

Elise Schenck
Data News Weekly
Contributor
Photos by Bobbie Jackson
Bobbie J Photos

Smooove Fest lit up the city last weekend with a high-energy celebration of hip-hop, culture, and community. Founded by Legendary DJ and Producer Raj Smooove, the festival drew hundreds of music lovers to experience the depth and diversity of New Orleans' Urban Music Scene.

A pioneer in Southern hip-hop, Raj Smooove's influence was on full display. With a career spanning over 30 years and collaborations with icons like Lil Wayne, Mannie Fresh, and Stevie Wonder, Smooove brought both star power and authenticity to the event.

The festival featured a dynamic lineup of DJs, bands, and MCs, blending classic beats with fresh talent. From seasoned performers to emerging local artists,



Smooove Fest creator DJ Raj Smooove is pictured with his family enjoying the inaugural festival, which was a resounding success. The event brought together music lovers from across New Orleans for a day of celebration, community, and culture.

Smooove Fest served as a vital platform for voices often under-represented in mainstream music spaces.

Held at the Broadside Theater,

Smooove Fest reflected the city's unique musical identity, infusing hip-hop with jazz, bounce, R&B, and soul influences. Beyond the stage, the event fostered com-

munity engagement with local vendors and food trucks making it as much a block party as it was a music festival.

Smooove Fest plans to build on

Raj Smooove's legacy of uplifting local talent and promoting unity through music, solidifying its place as a signature event in New Orleans' Cultural Calendar.

State & Local News

Ninth Annual NOLA Back 2 School Fest



Partnership is always a plus! Xavier University of Louisiana President Reynold Verret joined partners from Shell USA and Greater New Orleans STEM to celebrate community, collaboration, and a strong start to the coming school year at the 9th Annual Back 2 School Fest.



Smiles, school supplies, and community support! Shell USA and volunteers fueled young minds by supplying them with classroom essentials. Thanks to the 9th Annual NOLA Back 2 School Fest held on Saturday, July 26th, 4,000 students are starting the upcoming school year ready to shine!

Data News Staff Edited Report

Shell USA, Xavier University of Louisiana, and NOLA Showed Up Big for the Kids! The 9th Annual NOLA Back 2 School Fest spon-

sored by Shell USA, where 4,000 free backpacks filled with school supplies were given to K-6 students across the Greater New Orleans area. Families picked up the backpacks at the Xavier University drive-thru and the St. Joseph Academic/

Health Center walk-up location. Thousands of students across New Orleans are walking into the new school year well-supplied, confident, and ready to shine academically thanks to the Annual Back 2 School Fest.

Help Wanted

Administrative Assistant

- Data News Weekly, "The People's Paper," is looking for an administrative assistant.
- Compensation is competitive.
- Writing skills and detail orientation will be appreciated.

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U.S. Job Growth Stalls in July, Black Unemployment Remains Elevated

Stacy M. Brown
Black Press USA Senior
National Correspondent

The U.S. Economy added just 73,000 jobs in July, continuing a three-month trend of sluggish growth, according to the latest data released Friday by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The national unemployment rate held steady at 4.2 percent, with little movement across key sectors.

While health care and social assistance industries posted modest gains, federal government employment continued its decline, shedding 12,000 jobs in July and bringing total losses in the sector to 84,000 since January. The overall number of unemployed individuals stood at 7.2 million in July. Black workers continued to face a disproportionately high unemployment rate at 7.2 percent, nearly double the rate for White workers, which remained at 3.7 percent. Hispanic workers saw a jobless rate of 5.0 percent, while Asian workers had a jobless rate of 3.9 percent.

Teenagers experienced the highest unemployment rate of any group at 15.2 percent, while adult men and women reported 4.0 percent and 3.7 percent unemployment, respectively. The labor force participation rate remained at 62.2 percent, continuing a yearlong decline of 0.5 percentage points. The employment-population ratio also changed little, standing at 59.6 percent, down 0.4 percentage points over the past year.

The number of people unemployed for 27 weeks or longer rose to 1.8 million in July, an increase of 179,000, and now accounts for near-



ly one-quarter of all unemployed individuals. Meanwhile, the number of new entrants to the labor market, those looking for their first job, rose by 275,000 to 985,000. Wage growth continued modestly. Average hourly earnings for all private-sector non-farm employees increased by 12 cents to \$36.44, marking a 3.9 percent increase over the past 12 months. Production and nonsupervisory workers saw average hourly wages rise by 8 cents to \$31.34.

Job gains were most notable in the health care sector, which added 55,000 positions, including 34,000 in ambulatory services and 16,000 in hospitals. Social assistance added 18,000 jobs, primarily driven by a 21,000 increase in individual and family services. But nearly all other major industries, including manufacturing, construction, retail, professional services, and transportation, saw little to no job growth.

The average workweek for all employees edged up slightly to 34.3 hours. For production and nonsupervisory workers, the work-

week increased to 33.7 hours. Revisions to previous reports revealed a much weaker job market than initially reported. The May payroll number was revised down by 125,000 to 19,000 jobs, and June's total was lowered by 133,000 to just 14,000. Combined, these adjustments wiped out 258,000 jobs from

prior estimates. The BLS noted that employees on paid leave or receiving ongoing severance are still counted as employed in their surveys.

The following employment report, covering August 2025, is scheduled for release on Friday, September 5th.



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Compensation is competitive and great story ideas will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume and 3 writing samples to: terrybjones@bellsouth.net and datanewseditor@bellsouth.net.

We can't wait to
hear from you!

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