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The Federal Government Robbed 19 Million Meals From Senior Citizens

March 1, 2013 |

Across-the-board budget cuts scheduled to kick in today will eliminate 19 million meals for low-income seniors, according to the Meals on Wheels Association of America. In other words, the federal government's incompetence will come at the cost of senior citizens nutritional wellbeing.

The immediate cuts to Meals on Wheels adds to [a long list of programs](#) [3] helping the poor that will get squeezed by the sequester, including public rent assistance, emergency housing and farm loans.

The Obama administration says a more conservative 4 million meals under nutrition assistance programs will be cut under sequestration, but, as the [Huffington Post's](#) [4] Arthur Delaney explains, the president's estimate doesn't pass the sniff test:

The White House has not provided a detailed explanation of how it came up with its count of lost meals, but allowed there could be funding streams omitted from its estimate. The Meals On Wheels number is based not just on funding for home-delivered meals, but also funds for "congregant" meals served in group settings and funds for nutrition-service incentive programs.

While the president and congress sit back and watch across-the-board cuts go through, local media across the country have been reporting on how the cuts will hurt Meals on Wheels and other nutritional assistance programs in their respective communities.

In Columbia, South Carolina [WLTX-TV](#) [5] spoke with a local Meals on Wheels representative, who laid out the dire effects of cuts on local seniors.

"If that meal is cut or we can't get people on the program, then they are probably not going to get any nutritional value. For many of them that's the only meal they eat all day," said

E-mail address



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The Washington Monthly / *By Ed Kilgore*

COMMENTS

No Baby Formula for Poor Kids? Sequester Cuts Are Tragic Blow to the Poor

Although many of the big programs that serve poor Americans have been spared, the sequester will still have tragic consequences for poor families.



File picture. Republicans have proposed a three-month increase to the US debt ceiling as they mulled breaking a protracted fiscal impasse, but warned any long-term deal would require Congress to pass a budget that cuts spending.

March 4, 2013 |

One of the broad generalization you hear about the sequester is that it exempted the big programs that benefit the poor and elderly, notably Social Security, Medicare (the benefits, not the provider payments), Medicaid, CHIP and SNAP (a.k.a. food stamps). It's largely true, and progressive unhappiness over the erroneous belief in the White House that sequestration would never actually happen should be balanced with appreciation that the president (and more specifically, his chief negotiator Jack Lew) insisted on these exemptions.

But as the New York Times' Annie Lowrey [explains](#) today, the exemptions hardly insulated needy Americans from the sequester's willy-nilly destructiveness:

The \$85 billion in automatic cuts working their way through the federal budget spare many programs that aid the poorest and most vulnerable Americans, including the Children's Health Insurance Program and food stamps.

But the sequestration cuts, as they are called, still contain billions of dollars in mandatory budget reductions in programs that help low-income Americans, including one that gives vouchers for housing to the poor and disabled and another that provides fortified baby formula to the children of poor women.

Unless a deal is reached to change the course of the cuts, housing

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