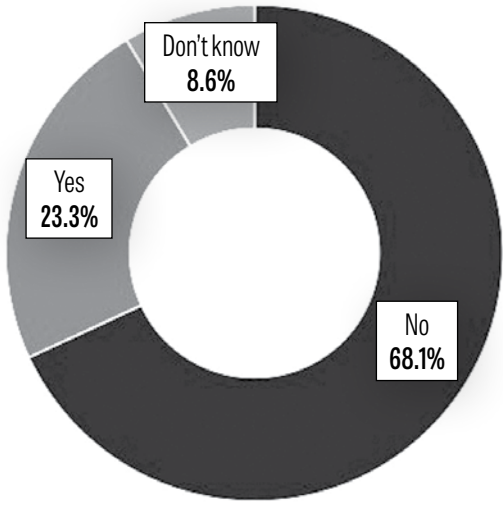


ONLINE POLL:

Are you excited about the \$14.2 million project that will bring seven new softball/baseball fields to Lakeview Park?



This poll reflects the opinions of 210 respondents. Visit [www.state-journal.com](http://www.state-journal.com) to take part in today's poll.

EDITORIAL

# When you can't find the sunshine, be the sunshine

When the Kentucky River recedes and the flood of 2025 becomes a memory, it won't be the number of feet the river rose or how many dollars in damage the water did to our community that we will remember most. It will be neighbors helping each other move to higher ground. Volunteers sandbagging streets in downtown Frankfort on a rainy Sunday and grilling free meals for those in need on Monday afternoon.

If you don't have water in your house or business, count yourself lucky. Many weren't so fortunate. Some lost their homes and belongings and many across the city still haven't been able to return to their residences to assess if there is any damage.

Not everything can be replaced. The family, friends and classmates of 9-year-old Gabriel Andrews are mourning the death of the Hearn Elementary School student, who was swept away in floodwaters while walking to the bus stop on Friday morning. As a community, we need to show his loved ones that they are not alone in their grief.

The Kentucky River will drop below major flood stage later this week, but the cleanup will just be getting started. We must continue to be there for one another and lift each other up in the weeks and months to come.

When tragedy or natural disasters strike, we are always reminded of the poignant words spoken by Fred Rogers many decades ago.

"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' To this day, especially in times of 'disaster,' I remember my mother's words and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers — so many caring people in this world."

For those who wish to volunteer, the Frankfort/Franklin County Office of Emergency Management has set up an online form to fill out at <https://forms.gle/WoUqSkdE7AKboBUF6> Monetary donations may also be made to the Frankfort/Franklin County Flood Relief Donation Fund at [https://bgcf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit\\_id=1985](https://bgcf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=1985). Funds will be distributed directly back to the community and more information will be available in the coming weeks about fund distribution.

When you can't find the sunshine, be the sunshine.

# Turning a mistake into a disaster

I spent much of my adult life in the military, where we used the acronym BLUF — Bottom Line Up Front. It means getting straight to the point without wasting time. So, here's the BLUF: Protecting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a moral, economic and public health necessity. Cutting benefits would hurt the most vulnerable Americans while weakening local economies.

SNAP is the largest federal nutrition assistance program in the U.S. It helps low-income individuals and families buy food, reducing hunger and improving nutrition. SNAP reflects a fundamental American belief: no one in the U.S. should go hungry, especially children, seniors and vulnerable populations.

SNAP is highly effective. For every \$1 in SNAP benefits, about \$1.80 is generated in economic activity, benefiting local businesses and farmers. It also lifts millions of people out of poverty each year and ensures food security for over 42 million Americans, including children, seniors and veterans.

Congress is considering cutting SNAP funding by \$230 billion over 10 years, a 20.6% reduction. In 2026 alone, this would result in a \$22.1 billion loss in federal funding. Key consequences include:

- ▶ State budget strain: States could lose \$1.6 billion to \$2.9 billion annually.

- ▶ Economic damage: A \$30 billion drop in overall economic output and the loss of approximately 143,000 jobs, particularly in food-related industries.

- ▶ Increased hunger and poor health: Families will struggle to afford nutritious food, leading to more developmental issues, obesity and chronic diseases.

SNAP is not just for families — it also supports farmers and local economies. The National Young

Farmers Coalition warns that these cuts would hurt agricultural sales and rural areas that depend on food assistance programs. Reducing SNAP funding removes a reliable market for farmers and grocery stores.



John Heltzel  
Guest columnist

As a parent and grandparent, I believe that protecting children should be a top priority. In 2023, 13.8 million children lived in food-insecure households. Food insecurity impacts:

- ▶ Academic performance: Hungry children struggle in school, leading to lower test scores and higher dropout rates.

- ▶ Health and development: Poor nutrition causes delays in growth, weakens the immune system and increases long-term health risks.

- ▶ Mental wellbeing: Food-insecure children are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, and behavioral issues that can last into adulthood.

Some policymakers argue that stricter work requirements would encourage employment, but most SNAP recipients already work in low-wage jobs that don't pay enough to cover food costs. These cuts would hurt seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities the most.

Despite claims that SNAP cuts are necessary for budget control, tax cuts for the wealthy will likely add trillions to the federal deficit. Prioritizing tax breaks over food assistance worsens economic inequality and fails to provide broad economic benefits.

We must take action to protect SNAP. Here's how:

- ▶ Contact your representatives: Demand they oppose SNAP cuts and support food security policies.

- ▶ Vote for leaders who support SNAP: Research candidates and vote accordingly.

- ▶ Support local farmers and food banks: Many SNAP-accepting markets help both consumers and farmers.

- ▶ Join advocacy groups: Organizations like Feeding America and local food pantries like the Emergency Food Pantry of Franklin County.

- ▶ Spread awareness: Share this information with your community and on social media.

Congress should pursue fair, effective policies that balance economic responsibility and public wellbeing:

- ▶ Maintain or strengthen SNAP: Every \$1 in SNAP benefits generates more economic activity than it costs, almost twice as much.

- ▶ Target tax reforms instead of cuts: Close tax loopholes rather than cutting essential programs.

- ▶ Invest in job training and livable wages: Help people transition off SNAP through better-paying jobs.

- ▶ Strengthen the Farm Bill: Protect food assistance programs and support American farmers.

- ▶ Use evidence-based deficit reduction strategies: Focus on reducing wasteful subsidies and closing tax loopholes.

These cuts will hit the nation hard, but Kentucky will suffer significantly. We are not prepared to handle the economic and social fallout. The best policy would balance tax fairness with investments in food security, job creation, and economic stability.

Protecting SNAP means protecting families, farmers, and local businesses. We can and must do better.

*John W. Heltzel, of Frankfort, is a member of the Emergency Food Pantry. He can be emailed at [jwsh57@gmail.com](mailto:jwsh57@gmail.com).*

LETTER

## BARR, COMER NEED TO REMEMBER THEY REPRESENT ALL THE PEOPLE

Dear editor,

Recently, Rep. Andy Barr, R-KY, said when asked why he wasn't scheduling an "in-person" town hall, he replied, "In-person town hall meetings are shouting matches," and he followed it up with "77 million people voted for the current administration is democracy."

Barr, may I remind you that you and the other robot, Rep. James Comer, R-KY, represent all the people!

The following is an in-person town hall with



you and Comer attending.

Citizen: Mr. Comer, representing Franklin County, do you believe Elon Musk, an unelected individual with no constitutional powers appointed by President (Donald) Trump, should have unlimited authority?

Comer: Trump said it. Musk wrote it. I believe it. Trump would never lie.

Citizen: Trump's tariffs will hurt Kentucky's educational system, manufacturing and agriculture. Are you in favor?

Barr: Tariffs will cause a recession but that will be OK.

Citizen: What about Musk's rape of the government?

Barr: There are millions of dollars of waste and abuse. We could save a lot more if we made the elderly work for benefits.

Citizen: Like how?

Barr: Sweeping the streets. Put brooms on their walkers.

Citizen: What about arresting immigrants who are legal citizens?

Comer: There are no legal immigrants. So, help me, Trump!

*Damian Beach  
Frankfort*

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The State Journal (USPS 520-160) is published Wednesday and Saturday mornings by Frankfort Newsmedia LLC, 1216 Wilkinson Blvd., Frankfort, Kentucky, 40601.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The State Journal, P.O. Box 368, Frankfort, KY 40602.

State Journal EZ Pay subscription rates: Monthly by mail, \$11.00 per month; three months - \$33.00; six months - \$66.00; 12 months - \$132.00. Plus tax.

For home delivery call the circulation department at 502-227-4556. Periodical postage paid at Frankfort, Kentucky 40601.

Unclaimed credit balances will be forwarded to our Newspaper in Education Program.

