

Christians divided on budget reconciliation bill

July 6, 2025

Some Christians praised President Donald Trump's victory in securing congressional approval of his "Big Beautiful Bill" as a "milestone for the pro-life movement," while others critiqued its cuts in social programs as "devastating" to the nation's most vulnerable citizens.

After the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives narrowly passed the budget reconciliation package, Trump signed it into law in a July 4 ceremony.

Brent Leatherwood, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, celebrated Trump's signing of the budget reconciliation bill because it defunds Planned Parenthood, "the nation's largest abortion provider," and related entities for one year.

"With the president's signature, today marks a new milestone for the pro-life movement. Defunding Planned Parenthood and big abortion have long been a priority for Southern Baptists, Christians and pro-life activists," Leatherwood asserted.

"These heinous organizations profit from death and, all too often, it is taxpayers who have funded their work. That repugnant scheme is halted beginning with this law."

'A cause for celebration'

Individuals and groups who have advocated for the sanctity of life are "beginning to see the fruit of our efforts," he added.

“We have brought forth generational victories with executive action, in the courts and now, finally, through the legislative process. It is fitting that this law is signed on the 249th anniversary of America’s birth, as it marks an undeniable step towards a more perfect union, a project set in motion by our Founders.”

Leatherwood thanked Trump and congressional leaders, as well as many Southern Baptists “who have been so courageous in boldly and publicly proclaiming what we know to be true about life: Each of us is made in the image of our Creator. As a result, every life is precious and deserved to be protected by the law.”

“We are closer to fully achieving that principle today than we were yesterday,” he said. “That is truly a cause for celebration on this, our Independence Day.”

Similarly, Terry Schilling, president of the conservative American Principles Project, called the budget reconciliation bill “a monumental victory for American families, delivering historic pro-family policies that strengthen our great nation.”

“I applaud President Trump for his unwavering commitment to putting families first and building a brighter future for our country,” Schilling said.

‘This isn’t reform—it’s abandonment’

Not all Christians joined in that “celebration” of the budget reconciliation bill becoming law or saw it as “putting families first.”

Jeremy Everett, founding executive director of the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty, said he and his colleagues were “not only grieved” but “stunned” by drastic cuts in funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

“The decision to gut SNAP, the most effective anti-hunger program in our nation’s history, is not simply misguided policy. It is a compromise of values.”

For more than 60 years, SNAP has “fed hungry children, strengthened rural economies, and helped working families bridge the gap between hardship and stability,” Everett noted.

The billions of dollars cut from SNAP “will be devastating for struggling Americans,” he said.

“Families will lose access to basic nutrition. Children will go to school hungry. Seniors will skip meals to afford medicine,” Everett asserted.

Since states will be faced with the “burden of billions in program and administrative costs,” some may choose to “opt out of SNAP entirely,” he added.

“This isn’t reform—it’s abandonment,” Everett insisted.

‘A litmus test for the condition of our souls’

Christians should recognize that treatment of “the least of these” represents “a litmus test for the condition of our souls,” he said.

“To reject care for the vulnerable is to reject Christ himself,” Everett said. “It is to replace humility with arrogance, mercy with ideology, and love with fear. When our leaders prioritize politics over people, especially the poor, they may win the day, but they lose the way.

“Let us be clear: empathy is not weakness. Compassion is not compromise. Feeding the hungry is not a partisan issue—it is a gospel issue. As

believers, we are not called to shrink back in moments like this. We are called to stand up.”

Celia Cole, CEO of Feeding Texas, the state association of food banks, urged elected officials to recognize “a budget is a moral document, and this one fails the test.”

The budget reconciliation bill “marks the most devastating rollback of food assistance in our nation’s history—slashing an estimated \$186 billion from SNAP and reneging on our nation’s commitment to ensuring access to food for those in need,” Cole said.

“In Texas, the consequences will be severe. The state will be forced to absorb an estimated \$806 million annually in new SNAP obligations, placing an untenable strain on our budget and threatening the food security of millions of Texans,” she asserted.

“Families already struggling to afford groceries, rent and health care will face even greater hardship. Seniors, veterans, working parents and children will be pushed further into poverty—not because they’ve done anything wrong, but because the burden of balancing the budget was placed disproportionately on those already facing the greatest challenges.

“At the heart of a just and compassionate society is the belief that no one should go hungry. Access to food is a basic human need. Ensuring that every person, regardless of age, parental or employment status, or other circumstance can put food on the table is not just a matter of policy—it’s a reflection of our shared values. ... Together, we must uphold the promise that in this country—and in this state—everyone has a seat at the dinner table.”