

OPINION

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DAILY NEWS

Daniel O'Brien Editor

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the goal of The Daily News to provide our readers with quality local coverage in a newspaper that is accurate, timely and filled with an intimate portrait of the communities in which they live, work and play.



Your Turn
 Sandra Montesino
 Guest columnist

USDA cuts, tariffs are impacting donations to food pantries

The rising cost of food is, sadly, not a new story. Post-pandemic, prices have continued on a steady incline with no relief in sight. What's new is that we're now doing this to ourselves, and our neighbors in need.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently cut more than \$1 billion in federal food security spending. In recent weeks, the will-they-won't-they surrounding U.S.-imposed 25% tariffs on nearly all goods imported from Mexico and Canada directly and indirectly impacted the cost of what American families put on our plates.

For starters, the rising cost of food, program cuts and imposed tariffs will significantly impact both corporate and individual donations to food pantries and food security programs like Framingham-based Daniel's Table. We expect an increase in demand for our services, while struggling with rising operational costs and a decrease in donations.

As the cost of living increases, many individuals find it more difficult to contribute to food pantries, leading to a decline in individual donations. This reduction further exacerbates our challenges of meeting the needs of our most vulnerable — specifically minimum wage workers, single-parent households and seniors on fixed incomes. Rising grocery prices means we may need to support these folks for longer periods, leading to a concerning strain on our resources. Feeding America, a nationwide network of more than 200 food banks, recently estimated that 1 in 10 people and 1 in 8 children in Massachusetts face hunger, and that was before these current problems started to kick in.

Food banks, which play a crucial role in supplying free or low-cost food to local pantries, are working to provide more food while dealing with rising procurement costs. They depend on purchasing in bulk to supplement donations received, but increased tariffs and a decrease in federal aid are driving up expenses. Consequently, their purchasing power will shrink, forcing tough decisions about the balance between quantity and quality of the food they distribute. Our local food bank has been forced to offer fewer food options and there is less fresh food to choose from. For the first time in a long time, we recently had to purchase food to supplement our free weekly market at Daniel's Table.

As a recipient of rescued food from area grocery stores, we've also seen a 31% decline in the amount of rescued food from this time last year. We believe grocery stores are adjusting their ordering practices to minimize excess inventory during a tight economy, which in turn reduces the amount of food available for donations.

Daniel's Table relies heavily on donations to sustain our operations. But as grocery prices rise, individual and corporate donors may struggle to contribute food and financial donations, reducing our available resources. Families who once donated regularly may now be faced with food insecurity themselves, further decreasing food and monetary donations.

This is not the time to cut food security aid or impose tariffs that increase food costs. The effects on all of us, and our neighbors in need, will be detrimental. No family should have to choose between paying for food and meeting their family's essential needs. Anything anyone can donate now would be deeply appreciated by every person who we help to build food security in their lives.

Sandra Montesino is executive director of Daniel's Table, a Framingham nonprofit that works to promote food security through a variety of school and community-side food supply programming.

ANOTHER VIEW



JERRY KING / SPECIAL TO THE CANTON REPOSITORY

Dems put federal bureaucrats ahead of ordinary Americans



Your Turn
 David Craig
 Opinion contributor

Talk about selective — and revealing — outrage. Democrats and their media allies are filled with indignation about President Donald Trump's ongoing bureaucratic firing spree, which has left thousands of government employees unemployed.

But where was the same moral fury five years ago, when tens of millions of Americans were forced out of work during the COVID-19 pandemic? Those ordinary Americans were denied the same sympathy and support that the left has bestowed on laid-off government workers.

I was serving as a Wisconsin state senator when the pandemic hit in March 2020, and from the start, I was shocked by the utter lack of concern that liberal leaders showed to everyday Americans. If only those Americans had worked for the federal government. Then, perhaps, the left would have taken their side.

Democrats defend government inefficiency

The moment Trump began the layoffs, Democrats sprang to bureaucrats' defense. They told us that slimming down bloated agencies is unconstitutional.

The left also claims that Trump is slashing jobs that America and the world can't do without.

And they've doubled down on their insulting attitude toward regular people.

Look no further than their rage against Tesla. Minnesota governor and former vice presidential candidate Tim Walz and legions of liberal activists have openly rooted for the demise of an American company famous for its innovation.

Progressives cheer for Tesla's failure

They dislike Tesla CEO Elon Musk so much that they want a company that employs tens of thousands of Americans to fail.

Where's the concern for the people who depend on Tesla for their paychecks? They're ignored by liberal politicians, who are far more concerned with bureaucrats who are dependent on taxpayers.

In "Animal Farm," George Orwell wrote that "all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others."



People protest against Tesla and its CEO Elon Musk outside a Tesla store March 29 in New York City. ECUARDO MUNOZ/REUTERS FILE

It's hard not to conclude that Democrats and the news media look at Americans in the same way. They talk a big game about protecting the working class, but they choose to protect federal workers who on average are paid much higher and receive much better benefits than most other Americans.

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For the left, Americans are equal, but the most equal Americans are the unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats who fund diversity, equity and inclusion programs and a LGBTQ+ comic book in foreign countries.

You'll excuse me if I, like most people, don't share the left's outrage that the country's longtime overlords are finally the ones losing their jobs.

David Craig, a former Wisconsin state senator and representative, is legal director at the Foundation for Government Accountability.

Letters policy

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