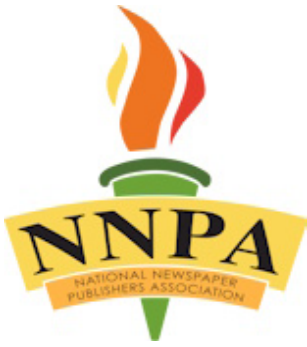




The Villager was founded by T. L. Wyatt in 1973, here, in East Austin, Texas.

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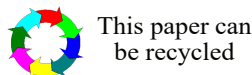
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RAPPIN'
THOMAS WYATT

Lake America

So, apparently, the secret to affordable groceries and cheap gas isn't policy, production, or paychecks—it's renaming a lake. Yes, friends, Lake Ontario is now Lake America, and we're told this linguistic miracle will somehow put food on your table and knock a few bucks off the pump.

Because nothing says "economic relief" like a shiny new sign. Forget supply chains, inflation, or wage stagnation—just slap a flag on a body of water and watch the magic happen. Maybe next week we'll rename the Mississippi "Freedom River" and see if milk prices drop by half.

We're assured this patriotic makeover will "boost morale" and "restore pride." Wonderful. Pride tastes great with a side of ramen noodles and a gallon of unleaded at \$5.19. Perhaps the new Lake America will start exporting optimism by the barrel—since oil seems to be in short supply.

Of course, the press release promises "economic ripple effects." That's true enough: every ripple starts with a stone tossed into deep water. The question is, who's eating while the rest of us are treading?

So, raise your glass—of tap water, not imported wine—and toast the dawn of a new era. Lake America: where symbolism floats and substance sinks. If you squint hard enough, you might even see the reflection of affordable living shimmering on the surface.

Just don't dive in looking for dinner.

Hypothetical Examination of Texas Based on Arizona's SNAP Collapse

By Thomas Wyatt | EIC, The Villager



(AUSTIN, TX) — When Arizona's SNAP participation fell by nearly half in less than a year, advocates across the country called it a warning siren. The numbers were staggering: a 48% drop in enrollment between July 2025 and June 2026, representing more than 437,000 people pushed off the rolls. Food banks in Arizona now serve more people each month than the state's SNAP program itself — a reversal never seen before. Leaders there describe the situation as "the canary in the coal mine," a preview of what could unfold elsewhere if similar policy conditions take root.

Below is a **hypothetical, narrative-style projection** of how Texas could experience a parallel decline — not a prediction, but a scenario built from Arizona's documented trajectory.

When Texas Starts to Look Like Arizona

By late 2027, Texas officials begin noticing something unusual in the monthly SNAP reports. Participation is slipping — slowly at first, then in sharp, unmistakable drops. The same federal changes that reshaped Arizona's caseload have now fully settled into Texas's administrative systems, and the effects are becoming visible in grocery aisles from El Paso to Beaumont.

At first, the decline is brushed off as a data anomaly. But by spring, the trend is undeniable. Enrollment has fallen by 15%, then 20%, then 30%. Caseworkers report that families who previously qualified are suddenly being flagged for removal. Parents who have relied on SNAP for years find their benefits terminated over minor paperwork errors or new eligibility rules they never knew existed.

Food banks across Texas — already strained by rising demand — begin to see surges reminiscent of Arizona's experience. In East Austin, lines wrap around the block at community pantries. Volunteers say they are seeing new faces every week: seniors who lost benefits after missing a recertification appointment, single mothers whose income calculations changed under new federal formulas, disabled Texans caught in bureaucratic limbo.

By autumn, Texas reaches a tipping point. For the first time, more Texans are visiting food banks each month than receiving SNAP — mirroring the historic reversal Arizona experienced months earlier. The state's emergency food network, never designed to replace federal assistance, begins issu-

ing public pleas for donations and volunteers.

Advocates warn that Texas is now living Arizona's story in real time. They point to the same national trend: SNAP participation has fallen in every state except Alaska since the One Big Beautiful Bill Act took effect, with declines of at least 5% in 44 states and at least 10% in 23 states. Texas, with its large population and already uneven access to grocery stores, is especially vulnerable.

In neighborhoods where food access was fragile even before the policy shift, the consequences deepen. Children lose benefits at rates similar to those seen nationally, where more than a million kids have already been pushed off SNAP since July 2025. Teachers quietly stock classroom snack bins. Churches expand meal programs. Families stretch budgets until they snap.

By winter, Texas officials can no longer deny the scale of the crisis. The state has become the second "canary in the coal mine," following Arizona's path almost step for step. And just like Arizona's leaders warned, the scenario is frightening — not because it was unpredictable, but because it was entirely foreseeable.

Back To Reality

This hypothetical story is not a prediction. It is a policy mirror, showing how Arizona's documented collapse could play out in a state with similar vulnerabilities:

- Large rural regions with limited grocery access
- High numbers of working-poor families who rely on SNAP to stabilize budgets
- Administrative systems already strained by caseload volume
- Food banks operating near capacity even before federal changes

Arizona's experience demonstrates how quickly a state's safety net can unravel when eligibility rules tighten, administrative burdens increase, and families lose benefits faster than support systems can adapt.

Texas is not destined to repeat Arizona's trajectory — but the warning signs are clear, and the consequences of ignoring them would fall hardest on the communities already carrying the weight of policy experiments.

INSIDE



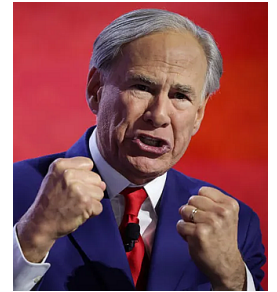
Jasmine Crockett focusing on down ballot candidates, not campaigning for Talarico.

See HOME, pg. 2



AISD making all the right moves to get kids to school.

See MODEL, pg. 3



Gov. Abbott picks fight with Trump's federal government over state funding

See MEDICAID, page 3.

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