

Recachinas serves up food for the needy and opinions on SNAP cuts

By Kendall Breitman

On a Wednesday afternoon, Demetrious Recachinas is pacing frantically through the lobby of Martha's Table, instructing volunteers to stock blue plastic bins with fresh fruits and coworkers to prepare local vans for food pickup. His concern quickly changes to a smile as his eager clients file through the entranceway on the fall's first cold day.

"I think my role to contributing to the fight against hunger is coming into work everyday and doing the job to the best of my ability," Recachinas, the Director of Food and Nutrition Programs, said.

Recachinas, 34, first became involved in the fight against hunger out of a love for food. Recachinas spent six years as a chef before realizing that his real dream was to use his cooking to help his community. On a whim, he says he decided to apply for a position at Martha's Table, a non-profit organization focusing on lower income residents of the District.

But while he loves serving his clients, his only complaint was that he wishes there were less of them. Since he started working in 2008, Recachinas says there has been a 75 percent increase in demand for the organization's food programs.

"We see more people come in here all of the time," Recachinas, the Director of Food and Nutrition Programs, said. "If the SNAP program gets cut, I can only really see it getting worse."

As Congress debates an update to the food and farm bill, House Republicans have proposed a plan that could cut \$40 billion from SNAP. SNAP, which stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as the food stamp program, currently provided 48 billion low-income Americans with food assistance. According to Recachinas, most of his clientele are recipients of SNAP benefits.

“They couldn’t come at a worse time,” Recachinas said in regards to the potential cuts. “I just feel that there are so many people struggling out there that it is not necessarily the right time to be cutting back on these programs.”

Beyond his own community, Recachinas says that if these cuts pass through Congress the affects will be felt across the nation. And even if the cuts do not pass, he says the fight to end hunger is one that will take more than money to solve.

“I have to believe that this widespread hunger issue is the same all around the country,” Recachinas said. “We’re in an affluent area and if we’re having these issues here I could only imagine that we are having these problems even worse in different areas of the country.”