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## Hunger in America

*Urge Lawmakers to vote 'no' on House SNAP Bill*

The House of Representatives is set to introduce its version of the SNAP (food stamps) reauthorization bill, cutting \$40 billion over ten years and cutting 4-6 million poor and vulnerable people from the program. The bill's cuts would impact so-called 'able bodied' adults without dependent children most directly, effectively eliminating benefits for this population unless they are working or enrolled in job training. This group includes large numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness or on the edge of homelessness, who earn an average of \$2,500 per year. Cutting off food stamps, often the only federal benefit this group receives, at a time of sustained unemployment is both callous and counter-productive, will worsen health, and will increase overall costs to our public systems. **The HCH Community must speak out now and defeat this attack on the poor and hungry.**

## TAKE ACTION

The vote on the House bill is likely to occur later this week, so action is needed today. Hundreds of other organizations are participating in a national call-in day, so our voice will be magnified that much more.

- Please use the **toll free** call-in number provided by Feeding America to call your Representative: **1-866-456-8824**.
- Once connected, ask to speak to the staff person who handles SNAP. If you cannot get connected to that staff person, leaving a message with the receptionist is fine.
- Ask if your Representative supports the House SNAP Bill. If they are opposed, thank them. If they are supportive, **urge them to vote no**.
- Provide examples of how the SNAP program has assisted you and/or the people you serve. Provide examples of how health and stability would be harmed if the people you serve lost their SNAP benefit. Check out this [letter](#) drafted by the Council and other homeless advocacy organizations for talking points.
- Read this [brief](#) by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities or this [op-ed](#) by the President of the Food Research and Action Center for more detail on the impacts of this bill.

This attack on anti-hunger programs is virtually unprecedented and will disproportionately impact the poorest in our communities. **As health care providers, we cannot stand idly by given the direct impact poor nutrition and hunger have on health status.** Speak out now and make sure these harmful cuts are defeated.

## Background

SNAP has historically been paired with other aspects of agricultural policy in what is typically known as the Farm Bill. Earlier this summer, the House failed to pass its version of the Farm Bill, having it unexpectedly defeated on the House floor. After that defeat, House leadership decided to pass an agriculture policy-only bill and leave the SNAP provisions out. This makes reauthorizing the SNAP program more difficult because a SNAP-only bill does not have the same level of support from Representatives from agricultural districts as a Farm Bill that includes needed agricultural policy initiatives as well.

The House Farm Bill failed because most Democrats voted against it as too harsh and dozens of very conservative Republicans voted against it as not harsh enough. The current SNAP Bill tries to appeal to those very conservative Republicans and will likely get no Democratic support. The Senate has already passed a full Farm Bill that cuts \$3 billion from the SNAP program over 10 years. Whatever the House passes, it will have to go to a Conference Committee with the Senate in order to get the legislation passed and sent to the President for signature.

In addition to the limits on benefits for 'able-bodied' adults referenced above, the House SNAP Bill has numerous other problematic provisions. One is that States who deny able-bodied adults benefits get to keep half of the money that they would have spent on SNAP for those beneficiaries with no strings attached. These federal funds can be used for any purpose. An additional provision changes the way cost of living is calculated, reducing or eliminating benefits for families even if they have very high housing or childcare costs. A third provision bars **for life** those convicted of certain violent crimes from receiving SNAP. For more information, please read the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [SNAP page](#).

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