

Talking Points to Protect and Strengthen SNAP in the 2018 Farm Bill

House

On May 18, the House rejected the House Farm Bill (H.R. 2), [198-213](#). H.R. 2 would take food out of the refrigerators and off the kitchen tables of more than 2 million people participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), cause 265,000 children to lose their free school meals, and set up an unproven workforce bureaucracy that would [burden states and participants alike](#). Low-income seniors, persons with disabilities, veterans, unemployed and underemployed adults, and working families with children already are struggling to purchase adequate diets throughout the month on low wages and modest SNAP benefits. Cutting SNAP eligibility and reducing benefits will increase hardship and food insecurity and depress purchasing power that drives local economic activity across America.

As amended on the House floor, H.R. 2 got even worse: it further restricts states' ability to waive the arbitrary SNAP time limit on people who do not prove sufficient regular weekly work hours, including in areas with insufficient jobs; opens up SNAP eligibility decisions to for-profit private contractors to make; imposes a lifetime ban on certain convicted felons who are making new starts after serving their sentences; and requires the USDA to review the current school meal nutrition standards regulations with an eye to rolling back the existing standards.

Urge Representatives to vote “no” on H.R.2 when the bill comes up for a second vote (potentially by 22.)

Thank Democrats and those moderate Republicans who voted against the bill (urge them to keep their “no” vote a “no”). For moderate Republicans who voted for H.R. 2, let them know that H.R. 2 would harm their constituents and educate them about how the bill got even worse in the amendment process. Let them know that the Senate’s farm bill – which has garnered overwhelming support in the Senate and by outside organizations – is a much better bill that would keep food on the table for their constituents.

Senate

On June 13, the Senate Agriculture Committee passed its version of the farm bill (S.3042). The Senate Farm Bill protects SNAP benefit levels and eligibility, keeps food on the table for struggling low-income people, preserves important state options, and makes modest changes to program operations. It builds on SNAP’s many strengths and avoids the very damaging changes that are contained in the House Farm Bill (H.R. 2).

Urge Senators to: 1) support and vote yes on S.3042 when it comes up for a vote on the Senate floor; 2) vote no on any and all harmful amendments that would weaken SNAP. Urge your Senators to follow the committee’s lead in protecting SNAP by opposing and speaking out on the Senate floor against any amendment that would cut or weaken SNAP. Senators should speak out about the importance of SNAP in [your state](#) and [across the country](#).

Every Senator matters. What they say publicly and in internal caucus discussions can help shape the Farm Bill’s provisions and make the difference on whether a bill protects SNAP or proposes cuts to it. It could also send a strong “protect and strengthen SNAP” message to Members of Congress involved in farm bill conference negotiations. Be sure to thank champions for being strong supporters of SNAP, urge them to support the bill, and ask for their help in stopping bad amendments.