

The Enhance Access to SNAP Act (EATS Act), introduced by Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), would put low-income college students on an equal footing with other people eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Existing rules pose extra hurdles to SNAP for most low-income college students enrolled in higher education at least half time. The EATS Act (H.R. 3183/S. 1488) would no longer condition their eligibility on performing 20 hours of outside employment or work study (students would still need to meet the income and other qualifications that all SNAP applicants must satisfy).

The EATS Act permanent law change is warranted and long overdue. A **large body of research documents**^{1,2} confirm that food insecurity is a significant problem among college students, especially students of color, students with low incomes, older students, and students who are parents. Food insecurity not only undermines the mental and physical health of college students, but it also undermines their short-term success and long-term financial stability, with detrimental impacts on their academic performance and ability to complete their degree.

The current SNAP eligibility rules for college students, regarding work study or employment, in particular, are counterproductive — too often limiting access to this **important and effective program**³ at a time when they are



trying to improve their economic well-being by earning a higher education.

The **temporary exemptions**^{4,5} to the general SNAP college student eligibility requirements created during the COVID-19 pandemic have ended. The EATS Act would permanently ensure more equitable SNAP access for low-income college students and better respond to their economic need.

Higher education pursuit and completion are increasingly important for an individual's long-term economic success and well-being, which, in turn, contribute to gains for the individual's community and the nation.

¹ <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/researchwire-summer-2018.pdf?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=928cc0a7-1eb3-4dde-a732-18df859bc887>

² <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-19-95>

³ <https://frac.org/research/resource-library/snap-public-health-role-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-improving-health-well%e2%80%90being-americans>

⁴ <https://frac.org/blog/new-exemptions-will-help-narrow-the-snap-gap-for-college-students-during-the-pandemic>

⁵ <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/preparing-changes-student-eligibility-following-end-covid-19-phe>

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