



The Honorable Mike Conaway  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

July 26, 2018

Dear Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson:

As an internationally recognized children's health system, we share a deep commitment to promoting the health and well-being of children and families. As you work to negotiate a final version of the 2018 Farm Bill, **we urge you to support the Senate provision on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and maintain the House funding level for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).**

Nearly 70 percent of SNAP participants are families with children, and half of all SNAP participants are children, numbering approximately 19.2 million.<sup>1</sup> Recent studies find that children who receive food assistance, such as SNAP and free or reduced lunch, benefit from improved health and academic performance; gains last well beyond their childhood years.<sup>2</sup> And, the Supplemental Poverty Measure indicated that in 2015, SNAP helped lift 2 million children out of poverty.

For these reasons, we encourage you to support the Senate provision that would maintain robust SNAP and maintain House funding levels for TEFAP. In particular we support the following provisions:

- Maintaining the state option (broad-based categorical eligibility), under current law, that allows states to adjust SNAP asset tests and screen families with gross incomes modestly above 130 percent of the poverty line, thus protecting families from a "benefit cliff." (Senate)
- Maintaining categorical eligibility for school-aged children (K-12) in households receiving SNAP benefits to automatically qualify for free or reduced school lunch. (Senate)
- Strengthening state flexibilities for exemptions which could strain low-income families, particularly those where a parent serves as a caretaker for a loved one such as a child with a disability. (Senate)

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<sup>1</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Policy Basics: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Washington, D.C. 2018.

<sup>2</sup>The White House, New CEA Report Finds that SNAP Benefits are Crucial for Families but Sometimes Inadequate, by Jason Furman, Cecilia Munoz, & Sandra Black. Washington, D.C. 2015.

- Modifying and strengthening SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) operations. (Senate)
- Maintaining SNAP-Ed funding, an evidence-based program that teaches SNAP beneficiaries about good nutrition and aims to reduce hunger and food insecurity. (Senate)
- Allowing retail food stores to offer incentives to SNAP customers to purchase certain foods recommended for increased consumption by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. (Senate)
- Reauthorizing TEFAP at a \$350 million funding level over 10 years. 20 percent of all food bank distribution comes from TEFAP, a crucial program for families in need. (House)

The Farm Bill represents an opportunity to strengthen and improve programs that are critical to health and well-being. As the Farm Bill advances to conference, we urge you to **protect the structure and funding of SNAP**. Overall, **78 percent of SNAP households include a child, an elderly individual, or an individual with a disability**. Our children are the most vulnerable population in our country and we urge the Conference Committee to **protect and strengthen SNAP in the conference process**.

We believe that a strong Farm Bill should protect children, families, seniors and those with disabilities facing hunger while at the same time supporting our communities. Restricting access to SNAP or reducing benefit levels threatens the health of millions of Americans. As this conference process continues, **we urge you to work with your colleagues to craft a final bill that protects and promotes the health of children and families**.

Sincerely,



Daniella Gratale, MA  
Director, Office of Child Health Policy of Advocacy  
Nemours Children's Health System

CC House Farm Bill Conferees