

May 12, 2025

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

The undersigned labor organizations write to urge you to reject any rollbacks of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the budget reconciliation process currently underway in Congress. We urge you to oppose any cuts to SNAP benefits, cost shifts to states, additional work requirements, restrictions on needed updates to ensure benefit adequacy, or attempts to privatize state and county merit-based workforces. Congress should instead work to preserve and strengthen essential food assistance benefits and the jobs supported by this important program.

SNAP is our nation's first line of defense against hunger and strengthens communities by reducing poverty, improving health and learning outcomes, supporting a productive workforce, and creating jobs.

SNAP is an economic multiplier. Each \$1 spent by SNAP generates between \$1.50 and \$1.80 in economic activity that is felt throughout the food chain—from farmers and ranchers, to food manufacturers and truckers, to grocers and store employees.¹

SNAP creates and sustains jobs.² SNAP benefits bring billions annually to the retail food industry—81% of benefits are used in grocery stores.³ Every \$1 billion of retail generated by SNAP creates \$340 million in farm production, as well as 8,900-17,900 full-time jobs including 3,300 farm jobs.⁴

SNAP creates union jobs along the food supply chain. Union members are on meat-cutting floors, delivering and preparing food for school meals, processing SNAP benefits, picking and harvesting the food that ends up on dinner tables, serving school children needed meals, working in America's forests, and checking out your constituents at the grocery store. SNAP is vital to creating good jobs for hundreds of thousands of American families.

SNAP serves people of all ages and all types of communities—rural, urban, and suburban. Four in five SNAP households (81%) have a child, a person aged 60 or older or a person with disabilities.⁵ Cutting SNAP will also impact access to school meals. Children whose families

¹ See Patrick Canning and Brian Stacy, "The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier," USDA Economic Research Service, July 2019, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err-265.pdf?v=2789.4> (Relevant research summarized at Table 1, p.7)

² The National Grocers Association, "Economic Impact Study Sales Impact Analysis and SNAP Impact Study," June 2021.

³ <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/2016-SNAP-Retailer-Management-Year-End-Summary.pdf>

⁴ Hanson, Kenneth. (2010). The Food Assistance National Input-Output Multiplier (FANIOM) Model and Stimulus Effects of SNAP. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR103/ERR103.pdf>

⁵ See "Characteristics of U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2020," USDA, November 2022, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resourcefiles/Characteristics2020-Summary.pdf>

receive SNAP benefits are directly certified for free school meals. When their SNAP benefit is removed, children also lose direct access to school meals.

SNAP is a temporary support that already imposes work requirements for able-bodied adults. And thanks in part to job-training and skills-building programs, the vast majority are able to find work. In fact, among households with working-age adults who did not receive disability benefits and reported receiving SNAP at some point, 86 percent had earnings during the year.⁶ Expanding punitive work requirements will not create jobs where none exist and would pose an insurmountable hurdle for countless individuals and families in times of recession.

Congress should strengthen—not cut—SNAP benefits. Current SNAP benefits are less than the average price of a cup of coffee. SNAP benefits currently average only \$6.20 per person per day. Mandating states pay a percentage of SNAP benefits will result in fewer people getting food. States already pay for the administrative costs of SNAP. Because states are required to balance their budgets each year, any additional costs would require them to raise an equal amount of revenue, cut funding, and/or change eligibility. States likely would not be able to fully fill in the dramatic hole created by the state cost shift and they would be forced to reduce food assistance—leaving many households currently eligible for benefits unable to afford groceries.

Mandating an additional hundreds of millions or billions of states' dollars would be an untenable strain on state budgets. The SNAP cost shift combined with the billions of dollars in Medicaid cost-shift in the same reconciliation bill would be a double knock-out to state budgets and working people.

At a time when working people across the country are struggling with the high cost of groceries, we urge Congress to spend our hard-earned tax dollars on agriculture policies that will create, not destroy, the good-paying jobs our families and communities need.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO

AFT

Alliance for Retired Americans

Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)

American Federation of Musicians

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

Association of Flight Attendants-CWA

American Postal Workers Union

BCTGM International Union

Communications Workers of America (CWA)

Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE)

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers ("IAM")

⁶<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-provides-critical-benefits-to-workers-and-their-families#:~:text=Over%20half%20of%20working%20people,after%20that%20month.>

International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers Union
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers (IBB)
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots
International Union of Elevator Constructors
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
National Education Association
National Nurses United
Office & Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)
SAG-AFTRA
SMART
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Transportation Communications Union (TCU-IAM)
Union Veterans Council, AFL-CIO
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)
United Mine Workers of America
United Steelworkers (USW)
Utility Workers Union of America
Working America, AFL-CIO
Writers Guild of America East