

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 26, 2023

Speaker Kevin McCarthy
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Glenn Thompson
400 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy and Chairman Thompson:

While our economy is strong and unemployment at historic lows, too many households in our wealthy country struggle to put food on the table. Millions of Americans, particularly families with children, households of color, and Indigenous communities, face high levels of hunger and food insecurity. Moreover, these communities also experience higher numbers of nutrition-related illness as result of limited access to quality food options. The most effective federal program that addresses food insecurity is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”) — the very program that key Republicans are now proposing to cut in budget negotiations and in the Farm Bill. As the Chairs of the Congressional Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific American (“Tri-Caucus”), we write to express our strong opposition to any budget or Farm Bill that would cut SNAP and take food away from children, older Americans, veterans, and others, and we are vehemently against making a SNAP work requirement or cutting federal food assistance programs as part of any agreement to raise the debt ceiling.

SNAP is a critically important program that reduces food insecurity and helps low-income families keep food on the table. Research shows its important impact in reducing hunger and poverty, while also producing long-term gains including greater educational attainment for students, improved health outcomes, and reduced medical costs for families. SNAP is vital not only for beneficiaries but for grocery stores and small businesses across the country. SNAP benefits are one of the fastest, most effective forms of economic stimulus because they get money into the economy quickly during a recession. Nearly 78 percent of SNAP benefits are redeemed within two weeks of receipt and 96 percent are spent within a month.¹ Every dollar in new SNAP benefits generates business for over 250,000 local retailers of all types and sizes,² and increases the

¹ [Castner, Laura, Wakar, Breanna, Wroblewska, Kathy, Trippe, Carole, and Cole, Nancy. “Benefit Redemption Patterns in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Fiscal Year 2017.” USDA Food and Nutrition Service.](#)

² [John Dunham & Associates, “The National Grocers Association Economic Impact Study Sales Impact Analysis and SNAP Impact Study,” the National Grocers Association.](#)

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Gross Domestic Product by \$1.50 during a weak economy.³ SNAP is both essential for American families and good for our economy.

This critical food assistance program is very important to the communities the Tri-Caucus' represent. Any cuts in SNAP would have a profound impact on low-income Black, Brown, and Indigenous households who face higher levels of food insecurity. According to U.S. Department of Agriculture ("USDA") data, in 2021 food insecurity affected about 20 percent of households headed by a Black adult, 18 percent headed by an American Indian or Alaska Native adult, and 16 percent headed by a Hispanic adult — all more than twice the share of households headed by a white adult (7 percent).⁴ In addition, USDA data reports prevalence of food insufficiency in 2022 was highest among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households (23.6 percent), Black households (19.7 percent), and American Indian and Alaska Native households (19.6 percent)⁵. More recently, USDA reported that child food insufficiency affected 23.2 percent of Black households, 21.9 percent of Hispanic households, and 13 percent of Asian households in February 2023 (compared to 8.2 percent of White non-Hispanic households).⁶ SNAP is highly effective in lowering food insecurity rates and plays a critical role in mitigating racial disparities in rates of food insecurity. Any effort to cut SNAP will only exacerbate these disparities.

Emerging proposals from key conservative Republicans to cut SNAP and make it harder for people to qualify or access benefits will most likely, simply put, take food away from potentially millions of our nation's poorest children, adults, veterans, and people with disabilities. In particular, the "America Works" proposal would expand SNAP's already harsh time limit, which terminates benefits if they can't show they meet or should be exempt from a work requirement. An independent analysis from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows that this proposal puts food benefits at risk for up to 10 million people, including vast numbers of poor children, veterans, and older Americans.⁷

Despite highly misleading attacks on SNAP, the fact is the vast majority of those receiving SNAP benefits are children, elderly individuals, and adults with disabilities, and thus are not expected to work. Most SNAP participants who can work are working and their benefits, coupled with their wages, help them put food on the table for their families. SNAP provides critical support to essential low-wage workers, including over 4.5 million service workers, 28 percent of agricultural processing workers, 27 percent of personal care aids, and 25 percent of maids and

³ [Canning, Patrick and Stacy, Brian, "The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier, USDA Economic Research Service.](#)

⁴ [Coleman-Jensen, Alisha, Rabbitt, Matthew P., Gregory, Christian A., and Singh, Anita, "Household Food Security in the United States in 2021," USDA Economic Research Service.](#)

⁵ ["Food and Consumers - Food Sufficiency During the Pandemic: The Household Pulse Survey," USDA Economic Research Service.](#)

⁶ [Ibid.](#)

⁷ [Bergh, Katie, and Rosenbaum, Dottie, "House Republicans' Proposals Could Take Food Away from Millions of Low-Income Individuals and Families," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.](#)

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housekeepers. All of these individuals work, but yet have to participate in the program because of low pay and inconsistent work hours.⁸

There is no excuse for Congress to enact legislation that would increase food insecurity, harm our grocery stores and small businesses around the country, and result in millions of our most vulnerable families and individuals losing their food access to food and the opportunity to experience improved life outcomes overall. It is imperative that the Farm Bill legislation brought to the House Floor this year protects SNAP eligibility for our communities. We urge you to ensure that any legislation brought to the House floor this year will protect this vital program.

Sincerely,



Steven Horsford
Chairman
Congressional Black Caucus



Judy Chu
Chairwoman
Congressional Asian Pacific Asian Caucus



Nanette Barragán
Chairwoman
Congressional Hispanic Caucus

⁸ [“SNAP Helps Low-Wage Workers in Every State,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.](#)