



## Greater Chicago Food Depository Statement on the House Agriculture Committee Farm Bill Updated April 17, 2018

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The House Agriculture Committee's draft Farm Bill, released on April 12, aims to weaken the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), our nation's most effective anti-hunger program. The Greater Chicago Food Depository strongly opposes this harsh proposal and will continue to advocate to protect SNAP and other federal nutrition programs.

If made law, this Farm Bill would increase hunger across the United States and in our community while creating additional strain on the charitable response to hunger. **At a time when more than 42 million Americans and 1.5 million Illinoisans struggle to access food, the proposals in this bill would result in deeper hardship for our most vulnerable neighbors.**

SNAP is our nation's frontline defense against hunger. The majority of SNAP recipients are children, older adults and people with disabilities. SNAP protects these vulnerable populations from the worst cases of hunger while also lifting millions of working families out of poverty. According to Moody's Analytics, in a strong economy SNAP generates \$1.22 in economic activity for every \$1.00 in benefits. **SNAP is effective, efficient and essential.**

This Farm Bill suggests additional time limits and work requirements on able-bodied adults, ages 18-59, who receive SNAP benefits, including some parents of minors. While this is framed as an incentive for unemployed SNAP recipients to rejoin the workforce, our experience in the community tells us that such rules would simply take food away from struggling households without regard for the availability of jobs or training programs in their community.

Most SNAP participants who can work, do work. But the reality of low-wage employment is that hours are often inconsistent, unpredictable or seasonal. SNAP helps job seekers by keeping food on their tables while they search for work. In Illinois, these changes could take benefits away from as many as 260,000 people, many of whom might face significant barriers to consistent employment.

Across the United States, SNAP and food banks work in tandem to prevent millions of Americans from going hungry. We are proud to be a part of this public-private partnership that responds to hunger every day in our community. If this Farm Bill proposal becomes law, food banks and pantries could never cover the difference.

While this Farm Bill does contain some minor improvements to SNAP, such as helping more military families access benefits, these good policies would be dramatically overshadowed by the harmful measures. **For this reason, the Food Depository encourages our members of Congress to vote NO on this Farm Bill.**

[A more detailed analysis of how this Farm Bill would affect hunger and federal nutrition programs can be found here.](#)

This is one step in a process and we will continue to advocate for the future of SNAP and other programs that are essential to the people we serve. Our struggling neighbors, and the more than 700 partner agencies and programs in our local network, deserve a Farm Bill that only strengthens the federal response to hunger.

If you believe that we should end hunger in Chicago, Cook County and the United States, we encourage you to write and call your members of Congress and tell them that "SNAP Works" and vote "NO" on this Farm Bill. For action alerts and more information, please visit <http://chicagosfoodbank.org/advocacy>