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House Farm Bill Would Increase Hunger & Poverty in America

Shriver Center Condemns Proposed Cuts to Federal Food Assistance

Chicago, IL—**No one should go hungry.** Thankfully, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) helps roughly 1 in 8 people—including 1 in 4 children—in this country put food on the table each month. SNAP’s modest benefits, averaging just \$1.39 per person per meal, have been shown to improve the long-term physical and financial health of recipients. What’s more, despite the wrongheaded rhetoric peddled by many lawmakers, SNAP also serves as a crucial work support for millions of low-wage workers, supplementing their low and erratic pay.

Yet just months after enactment of the GOP tax plan, which delivers massive giveaways to large corporations and our country’s wealthiest households, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway (R-TX) has proposed a highly-partisan version of the farm bill that includes steep cuts to the program, threatening food assistance for at least 1 million people. Just the latest attack by Congressional Republicans on the living standards of people living in or near poverty, the bill would, among other things, expand onerous and harmful “work requirements” to older adults and adults with children, curtail the ability of states with high unemployment rates to waive the work requirements, and slash benefits afforded to recipients under categorical eligibility—a provision of federal law that allows states to adjust income limits to ensure that working families don’t abruptly lose their SNAP benefits when they earn slightly more.

The House farm bill’s proposed cuts to SNAP would cause hunger and poverty to soar. Children and older adults would be harmed the most. And, by taking crucial food assistance away from struggling low-income adults, the bill would make it much more difficult for them to find or maintain work.

The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law denounces this harsh and ill-considered piece of legislation and calls on federal lawmakers from both sides of the aisle to roundly reject it. If policymakers are serious about improving the financial well-being of low-income and working people, they should be building on our country’s most effective anti-hunger program—not tearing it down.

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