



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

For science. For action. For health.

May 16, 2018

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals that champions the health of all people and communities, I write in strong opposition to H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. We are deeply concerned about the damaging proposals included in the bill that would end or cut benefits for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participants.

SNAP is the country's most effective anti-hunger program, helping millions of low-income Americans to put food on the table. SNAP helps reduce food insecurity and health complications stemming from hunger and poor nutrition for nearly 1.5 million veterans, 6 million people with disabilities, 9 million seniors and 19 million children. These populations already face barriers to social and economic mobility that will only be exacerbated by this legislation's massive cuts to SNAP benefits. At a time when our nation faces a growing and aging population and a health workforce shortage, we cannot afford to jeopardize this critical public health program.

The House Farm Bill would also impose new and unnecessarily tough work requirements on many SNAP participants. This overlooks the fact that majority of able-bodied SNAP recipients are already employed. The new work requirements would cause millions of low-income individuals to lose benefits and would do little to increase employment. Furthermore, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that of the millions of participants who would lose benefits, more than 740,000 are households with children.

We also urge the House to reject provisions in the bill that would weaken or prevent laws that protect the public from pesticides and to oppose provisions that eliminate key conservation programs that are important for the long-term sustainability of agricultural lands and the health of their surrounding communities.

Finally, we urge all members to oppose any amendments to the bill that would undermine the evidence-based nutrition standards for meals, foods and beverages sold in schools. We cannot afford to turn back the progress we have made in providing more nutritious food for our nation's children.

We strongly urge you to reject this bill and to instead work to develop a bipartisan Farm Bill that reduces hunger, improves nutrition and maintains important conservation and environmental health protections.

Sincerely,

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director