



May 22, 2024

The Honorable Glenn Thompson  
Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Scott  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Scott:

As the committee holds this week's markup of the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024, I write to urge you to use this opportunity to work in a bipartisan manner to explore how Congress can best support nutrition access for families across our nation. Access to healthy food is an important social determinant of health; for example, research shows that food insecurity among children may result in increased risks for hospitalizations, asthma, depression, suicide, and oral infections.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, many families across the nation do not have consistent access to healthy food, and more than 41 million people across the United States experience food insecurity.<sup>2</sup>

The Farm Bill Reauthorization is an opportunity to strengthen nutrition assistance programs that serve as a safety net for many of those at risk of food insecurity. To fight hunger and increase access to healthy food, I urge the House Committee on Agriculture to prioritize including provisions that were included in the Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act introduced by the Senate Agriculture Committee. These include provisions that would strengthen the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and reduce barriers to SNAP participation for college students, military members and older adults, establish a pathway for Puerto Rico to participate in SNAP, restore access to SNAP for individuals convicted of drug-related felonies, increase funding for food banks, and support pathways to work through the SNAP Employment and Training Program. These provisions would help lift millions of families out of hunger and promote healthier and happier communities with lower health care costs.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, I urge you to reject the inclusion of provisions included in the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024 that, as the Congressional Budget Office estimates, would cut \$30 billion in funding from the SNAP program over the next ten years. These cuts would impact tens of millions of SNAP participants and drastically reduce the ability of low-income families to access nutrition benefits.

Thank you again for your ongoing support for nutrition and public health. Please let me know if I can be of assistance to you on this important reauthorization or any additional efforts to improve and protect the health of the nation.

Sincerely,

Georges C. Benjamin, MD  
Executive Director

1. World Health Organization. Global health risks: mortality and burden of disease attributable to selected major risks. Available at: [http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global\\_burden\\_disease/GlobalHealthRisks\\_report\\_full.pdf](http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/GlobalHealthRisks_report_full.pdf). Accessed January 12, 2019.
2. Feeding America. Food security in the United States. Available at: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/>. Accessed January 12, 2019.
3. Cost-effectiveness of financial incentives for improving diet and health through Medicare and Medicaid: A microsimulation study. Lee Y, Mozaffarian D, Sy S, Huang Y, Liu J, Wilde PE, Abrahams-Gessel S, Jardim TSV, Gaziano TA, Micha R. *PLoS Med.* 2019 Mar 19;16(3):e1002761. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1002761. eCollection 2019 Mar. PMID: 30889188.