

Oregon organizations oppose House farm bill

Harsh time limits on food assistance would increase hunger in Oregon

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OREGON— Organizations across Oregon are calling on U.S. Representatives to reject a Farm Bill that was passed yesterday by the U.S. House Agriculture Committee.

The bill dramatically increases the number of SNAP participants subject to harsh time limits, including underemployed parents with children over 6 years-old, and adults up to age 60 facing career changes due to shifts in the economy.

“Taking away food assistance from people struggling to find work is cruel, and incompatible with Oregon’s values,” said Annie Kirschner, Executive Director for Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. “It’s wrong and we will not stand for it. The bill would increase hunger in Oregon and across America by punishing millions of people by taking away or lowering SNAP benefits.”

“We know that people using SNAP are doing everything they can to provide for their families,” said Susannah Morgan, CEO of Oregon Food Bank. “As a mother myself, it’s difficult for me to think about parents losing the SNAP benefits they count on to help feed their children—especially while living under the stresses of poverty.”

If harmful SNAP cuts are implemented, private charities like Oregon Food Bank simply could not make up the difference. According to a Feeding America analysis, SNAP provides 12 meals for every 1 meal that Feeding America’s national network of food bank provides.

The bill cuts \$23.1 billion from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, commonly known as food stamps) benefits over the next 10 years. SNAP helps 1 in 6 Oregonians have enough to eat during tough economic times. The majority of SNAP participants are children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Congress must recognize that large numbers of their constituents, in every part of the country, are struggling—in urban, suburban, and rural areas especially. We must help people rise out of hunger and poverty by increasing the number of well-paying jobs that provide real opportunity and stability for people, and increasing the amount of assistance available through SNAP, not cutting and restricting access to food.

Groups are calling on Congress to oppose this harmful bill and instead, work on a bipartisan basis to reduce hunger in Oregon and in America.

Archdiocese of Portland

“Jesus called us to feed the hungry and show special concern for those who are poor. In the story of the Last Judgment, Jesus reminds us that one of the fundamental measures of our lives will be how we cared for people in need: 'For I was hungry and you gave me food' (Mt 25:35).

"When faced with tens of millions still unsure about how they will put food on the table, robust funding of SNAP and other that feed hungry families must be prioritized. For they were hungry and Congress ensured that they were fed.”

Keith Thomajan, President and CEO, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette

“Growing pressures on vulnerable and working-class families make it very hard to meet daily basic needs in our region. We know that 53% of Oregonians getting SNAP are families with children and that this support plays a critical role in stabilizing these families. As a champion for children, United Way of the Columbia Willamette is working to end the effects of poverty. Let’s not add another barrier for kids and families by limiting access to food assistance.”

Robin Stephenson, Bread for the World Oregon

“Work is the surest way out of hunger. However, the work requirements and benefit cuts proposed in the House version of the Farm Bill will not reduce hunger or poverty. As written, the bill would create greater hardship for Oregonians already struggling to put food on the table. Bread for the World strongly opposes changes to SNAP that would put millions of vulnerable Americans at risk of hunger. We encourage Congress to work toward a bipartisan Farm Bill that will help end hunger in Oregon, our nation, and around the world.”

Juan Carlos Ordóñez, Communications Director, Oregon Center for Public Policy.

“This bill attacks one of the nation’s most important anti-poverty programs, which protects millions of Americans from hunger. This bill will make life even harder for Americans who toil in low-paying jobs with irregular hours and little or no benefits.”

Mike Wenrick, Executive Director, Zenger Farm

“At Zenger Farm we care deeply about families and their ability to access nourishing food. The current version of the farm bill will take SNAP benefits from millions of families, jeopardizing food security, increasing social and economic stress and further perpetuate diet-related chronic disease. We must speak up to ensure we continue to support farmers and families through a common sense farm bill.”

Jaime Arredondo, Executive Director, CAPACES Leadership Institute, Board Member, PCUN

“Chairman Conaway’s 2018 farm bill is a disgrace to humanity. Having food assistance is a basic right for all human beings no matter your circumstances. We already have a significant hunger problem in a nation full of abundance, ironically. Instead of taking away food from people, we should work towards eradicating this problem. I’ve benefited from the SNAP program as a child. I’ll never forget what it felt to go to the grocery store with my mother when she would receive SNAP funds. It felt like the grocery store was mine. Like I could try anything. Abundance. I think every child deserves that.”

Beverlee Potter, Executive Director, FOOD for Lane County

“In Lane County the economy continues to improve, yet many people are still struggling with low wages and very high housing and childcare costs. Stripping away basic food assistance from working families is like pulling the rug out from under them while they are already focusing on improving their livelihoods”

Tonia Hunt, Executive Director, Children First for Oregon

"The federal SNAP program is often the only difference between a child going hungry and one that has a proper meal. Our Congressional delegation needs to know Oregon's children will be profoundly harmed by the unnecessary work requirements in this legislation. Oregon's hunger and food insecurity rates are already rising, with rates approaching 50% for households led by single mothers. Our children deserve a nutritious start to life. It hurts all of us when kids go hungry.”

Additional Resources:

- [Analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities on the House Farm Bill proposal](#)