



Response to Today's Vote to Pass H.R. 2 – Farm Bill

June 21, 2018

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed [House Resolution 2](#), the House version of the 2018 Farm Bill. The [final vote was 213-211](#). This, after the bill failed to receive enough votes for passage in May of this year.

H.R. 2, if enacted, would make cuts to benefits and erect new red-tape barriers to providing vital food assistance for the nearly 4 million California SNAP recipients who need it most and who live in [every California Congressional District](#). For more on this, see [Western Center's position paper on the bill](#) or our [more detailed paper on the impact](#) of the bill prior to amendments, which imposed several additional cuts to the program.

“Congress got a do-over on their Farm Bill failure, but poor Americans experiencing hunger will not,” said Jessica Bartholow, Western Center’s lead anti-hunger advocate about the passage of H.R. 2 “Children who experience even one episode of hunger can have their health and mental health impacted into adult hood. Adults who suffer from hunger can experience increased pain and hardship and worsening health. The changes that this bill proposes are cruel and inhumane.”

The Senate Will Vote Next Week

The [U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry](#) passed out the [2018 Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 \(S. 3042\)](#) with a bi-partisan vote of 20 to 1 and is expected to be heard on the Senate floor before the July recess. Our statement about that bill is [posted here](#). We are urging California’s Senators Feinstein and Harris to adamantly oppose all harmful amendments to the bill.

Background

Every 4-5 years, the [Farm Bill](#) is reauthorized in Congress. In anticipation of this effort, the House Agriculture Committee held several dozen hearings in 2017 and early 2018. This bill is important to low-income Americans because it includes the authorization for one of the largest social safety net program, the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#), known as [CalFresh in California](#).

Anticipating the 2018 debate, the Trump Administration issued a set of [Farm Bill Principles](#). In contrast, California Anti-Hunger Advocates issued [this letter of principles](#) for the Farm Bill prior to the debate calling on Congress to strengthen & support SNAP.

California Has Broad Support for SNAP in the Farm Bill

California has been especially united against cuts to SNAP in the Farm Bill and, instead, has been calling for increased investments. Below are links to several letters and resolutions from Californians:

- Over 100 organizations [signed on in opposition to the House Farm Bill](#).
- Several CA Mayors signed this [bipartisan mayors](#) urge Congress to not “impose cuts and new requirements [in the Farm Bill] that would punish those already struggling to make ends meet.”
- The [California Legislature](#) asks California's Congressional Delegation "to reject all proposals in the House farm bill that would result in reduced food assistance and weaker environmental protections to Californians.”
- The [California Department of Agriculture, California Environmental Protection Agency, California Natural Resources Agency, and California Health & Human Services Agency](#) letter to Senate and House Ag Committee leadership provides recommendations for the 2018 Farm Bill, including robust funding for domestic food and nutrition programs. The letter also urges that the structure of SNAP be maintained so that it stays responsive to economic changes and can adequately support Californians in need.
- The [County Welfare Directors Association of California](#) has joined with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC) to oppose provisions in the House Farm Bill, H.R. 2, that would reduce eligibility and cut benefits to needy families who rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California.
- The [Alameda County letter](#) contains signatures of elected representatives from cities and communities across Alameda County, and urges support of CalFresh/SNAP, and opposes any cuts to benefits, limits on eligibility, and efforts to block grant the SNAP program.
- The [Marin County Board of Supervisors letter](#) outlines the importance of SNAP/CalFresh for residents of Marin County and the state of California and urges Representatives from California on the House Agriculture Committee to defend and strengthen SNAP.
- On May 29, 2018, the [Los Angeles City Council passed a resolution 15 to 0](#) to oppose any Farm Bill that cuts SNAP and LA Board of Supervisor [Sheila Keuhl has issued a statement](#) about the impact on Seniors and the LGBTQ community.

For more information about Western Center’s Anti-Hunger Priorities for Federal Lawmakers, go to www.wclp.org or contact Jessica Bartholow at jbartholow@wclp.org