



## Response to Today's U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture vote on S. 3042 – 2018 Farm Bill

June 13, 2018

Today, 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.

With 40 Million Americans, [4 million of whom live in California](#), struggling to prevent hunger every day, California's anti-hunger community [articulated our hope](#) at the beginning of [Farm Bill](#) deliberations that legislative leaders would use the reauthorization to strengthen and support the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as [CalFresh in California](#). SNAP recipients live in every community [throughout California, in rural](#) and [urban](#) communities alike.

While SNAP is our country's most important defense against hunger, it only provides \$2.00 per meal, an amount that the [National Medical Association has determined is less than what is needed to purchase a healthy diet](#). Because benefits are so low, nearly one-third of households that receive SNAP rely on food banks to meet further protect against hunger. S. 3042 also funds these programs, through the [Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#) at an amount lower than requested by food bank officials and necessary to meet the need.

S. 3042 also eliminates state bonuses for improved participation and payment accuracy. California has historically benefited from these bonuses. Existing law directs states to reinvest the bonuses through program technology, administration and integrity improvements, enhancements that strengthen SNAP access and participation statewide. Removing these bonuses would threaten the forward progress in program administration that our state and states across the country are making.

Finally, while S. 3042 supports and extends the reach of important SNAP [employment and training \(E&T\) pilots](#), a change we support, it also codifies regulations for the [Able Body Adult Without Dependents \(ABAWD\)](#) time limit and related work requirements, a change we cannot support. This rule has long-been opposed by anti-hunger advocates in the state and we have recently been joined by [Secretaries of three California Agencies in calling for the rule be repealed altogether](#). The proposed amendments in S. 3042 are not, on their face, problematic, but amending the rule takes SNAP policy in the exact opposite direction than what we had proposed and so we cannot support it.

While we congratulate the Senate Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) for their leadership in securing a bi-partisan bill, especially one that makes no cuts to SNAP benefits, and we are relieved that they did not follow the lead of the House Agriculture Committee Chairman Michael Conaway (R-TX), whose [Farm Bill \(H.R.2\) anti-hunger advocates, state elected leaders, county welfare directors and administrators](#), and [bipartisan mayors](#) are intensely opposed to, we are disappointed that S. 3042 does not strive to achieve an America where no one goes hungry.

*For more information Western Center's Farm Bill Advocacy*, please visit [www.wclp.org](http://www.wclp.org), or contact Jessica Bartholow at [jbartholow@wclp.org](mailto:jbartholow@wclp.org) or 916-282-5119. You can also consult [Western Center's position paper on H.R.2](#) or our [more detailed paper on the impact](#) of H.R. 2 on California.

*For more information on the California Association of Food Bank's Farm Bill Advocacy*, please visit [www.cafoodbanks.org](http://www.cafoodbanks.org) or contact: Andrew Cheyne at [andrew@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:andrew@cafoodbanks.org) or Rachel Tucker at [rachel@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:rachel@cafoodbanks.org).