



May 15, 2019

Honorable Barbara Lee  
 Chair, Majority Leader's Task Force on Poverty and Opportunity  
 U. S. House of Representatives (CA-13)  
 2470 Rayburn House Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Endorse House Resolution to End the 3 Month SNAP Time Limit for ABAWDs**

Dear Representative Lee:

We are writing with our endorsement for the forthcoming House bill that would repeal the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limit for Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs).

In 1996, through the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA),<sup>1</sup> Congress created a time limit in the Food Stamp Program, now known as SNAP, for

<sup>1</sup> Public Law 104-193: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-104publ193/html/PLAW-104publ193.htm>

unemployed childless adults between the ages of 18 and 49 years old, referred to as ABAWDs.<sup>2</sup> Unless exempt,<sup>3</sup> an ABAWD is limited to receiving federal food benefits for just three months out of any thirty-six month period unless they satisfy the 20 hours-per-week work requirement associated with this time limit.

With more than 20 years of the law and regulation in place, no research has provided evidence that denying food to people after 3 months of aid results in a quantifiable increase in earnings from work or reduction in poverty. In fact, the opposite is true. Recent research has found that the time limits and related work requirements are a failed intervention and only serve to make people hungrier and less able to exit poverty. Regardless of opinions about people who turn to SNAP for help when they are out of work, cannot work, or are underemployed, punishing people with hunger after three months because they are in an unpopular minority is cruel and defeats the stated purpose of the program.

For these reasons and many more, our organizations endorse your legislation to end the SNAP ABAWD Time Limit and we look forward to supporting your efforts in passing this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely, The following California organizations: AC Strategic Solutions; Alameda County Community Food Bank; Black Worker Center of Los Angeles; California Association of Food Banks; California Hunger Action Coalition; California Institute for Rural Studies; California Welfare Rights Organizations; Center for Employment Opportunities; Central California Food Bank; Children's Defense Fund of California; County Welfare Directors Association of California; Community Action of Napa Valley Food Bank; Community Clinic Consortium of Solano and Contra Costa Counties; Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County; Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP); Feeding San Diego; Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano; Food for People Humboldt County; Food Share of Ventura County; Fresh Approach: Making Healthy Food More Accessible in the Bay Area; Hunger Action Los Angeles; Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative; The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank; Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles; Los Angeles Regional Food Bank; Orange County Food Bank; ProduceGood; Public Interest Law Project; Redwood Empire Food Bank; Rubicon Services; Sacramento Food Policy Council; SAGE Sustainable Agriculture Education; San Diego Hunger Coalition; San Diego Hunger Advocacy Network; San Francisco Marin Food Bank; Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County; Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County; Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties; Sierra Harvest; Shelter Inc.; St Vincent De Paul of Contra Costa County; Western Center on Law and Poverty; and, Yolo Food Bank

CC: Speaker Nancy Pelosi, U.S. House of Representatives  
Chairman Collin Peterson, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Agriculture  
Chairwoman Marcia L. Fudge, U.S. House Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition,  
Oversight, and Department Operations  
California Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

***For more information about this letter, contact: Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty at [jbartholow@wclp.org](mailto:jbartholow@wclp.org) or Andrew Cheyne, California Association of Food Banks at [andrew@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:andrew@cafoodbanks.org).***

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<sup>2</sup> 7 U.S.C. § 2015 (o); 7 C.F.R. § 273.24; MPP § 63-410.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 1: CalFresh ABAWD Verifications Exemptions & Work Activities (WCLP, September 2018), [https://wclp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ABAWD\\_Verification\\_Chart\\_Final\\_WCLP\\_9.28.18.pdf](https://wclp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ABAWD_Verification_Chart_Final_WCLP_9.28.18.pdf)