

# CSNA FARM BILL PRIORITIES



The reauthorization of the Farm Bill this year offers an urgent opportunity to strengthen food and nutrition security for children through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and several other important nutrition programs. Reauthorized every five years, the Farm Bill's provisions will affect the health of generations to come. For more information, see our policy brief, "[What the Farm Bill Means for Kids](#)". Please find below a list of bills First Focus Campaign for Children endorses to strengthen the nutritional safety net for children and families under the Farm Bill.

Please note that this list is not all-encompassing and will be updated periodically. For more information, please contact **Abbie Malloy** ([abbie@firstfocus.org](mailto:abbie@firstfocus.org)) or **Libby Mullin** ([libbymullin1@me.com](mailto:libbymullin1@me.com)).

## Nutrition

### **Improving Access to Nutrition Act (H.R. 1510)**

Introduced by Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), the Improving Access to Nutrition Act eliminates time limits for able-bodied adults without dependents. Children often depend on pooled resources (including SNAP benefits) from extended family members who do not claim them as dependents. This legislation also helps continue SNAP benefits for youth aging out of foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth over the age of 18, who already experience high rates of unemployment and poverty and face barriers to accessing public assistance programs.

### **LIFT the BAR Act (S. 2038/H.R. 4170)**

Current law requires that lawfully present immigrant families endure a five-year waiting period before accessing critical benefits, including SNAP. Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) and Sen. Mazie Hirono's (D-HI) LIFT the BAR Act removes this arbitrary barrier and allows thousands of children to access critical public benefits such as SNAP, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and Medicaid without a waiting period.

### **Hot Foods Act of 2023 (S. 2258/H.R. 3519)**

The Hot Foods Act, introduced by Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY) and Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO), eliminates the arbitrary prohibition on SNAP recipients purchasing hot and pre-prepared foods. Allowing SNAP recipients to purchase hot foods allows parents who may be working multiple jobs and experiencing "time poverty" or who are housing insecure to put hot and nutritious meals on the table for their children. Eliminating this unnecessary stipulation will help children receive the meals they need regardless of circumstance.

### **Closing the Meal Gap Act of 2023 (S. 1336/H.R. 3037)**

Introduced by Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC) and Sen. Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY), the Closing the Meal Gap Act aims to expand SNAP benefits by increasing eligibility and eliminating arduous time limits, increasing SNAP allotments, and expanding access. The legislation allows families in Puerto Rico to access the same benefits as families in the continental United States, replaces the Thrifty Food Plan with the Low-Cost Food Plan as the basis of SNAP allotments (increasing benefits by 30%), and eliminates bureaucratic time limits that unduly create barriers to enrollment.

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## **Opt for Health with SNAP, Close the Fruit and Vegetable Gap (OH SNAP) Act (S. 2015/H.R. 4149)**

The OH SNAP, Close the Fruit and Vegetable Gap Act, introduced by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE), would expand the Farm Bill's GusNIP program. GusNIP offers competitive grants to nonprofit organizations and local governments for projects that incentivize SNAP participants to purchase fruits and vegetables. This legislation would increase both mandatory and discretionary funding to allow more retailers to participate in the point-of-sale fruit and vegetable incentives offered by the program.

## **Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Nutrition Act of 2023 (S. 1639)**

Sen. Marco Rubio's (R-FL) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Nutrition Act of 2023 builds on the success of the United States Department of Agriculture's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). The FFVP assists elementary schools in purchasing fresh produce for their students and prioritizes schools with high enrollment in free and reduced-price meal programs. This legislation also expands the program to include middle and high schools, ensuring that children of all ages can consume the produce they need to thrive.

## **SNAP Access for Medically Vulnerable Children Act (H.R. 706)**

The SNAP Access for Medically Vulnerable Children Act, introduced by Rep. Shontel Brown (D-OH), updates the SNAP Excess Medical Expense Deduction to include children with one or more chronic conditions. Any medical expenses above \$35 could be deducted from a family's net income. The SNAP Access for Medically Vulnerable Children Act, introduced by Rep. Shontel Brown (D-OH), updates the SNAP Excess Medical Expense Deduction to include children with one or more chronic conditions. Any medical expenses above \$35 could be deducted from a family's net income. This means that a family's SNAP allotment adequately takes into account their medical costs and reflects that their income may be reduced due to medical needs. This means that households no longer have to choose between paying for medical expenses or putting food on their children's plates.

## **RESTORE Act of 2023 (S. 1753/H.R. 3479)**

Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN)'s RESTORE Act lifts the lifetime SNAP ban on individuals with drug felonies. The lifetime ban pushes more parents toward recidivism and unduly strips food assistance from their children. Removing these barriers to reentry sets up formerly incarcerated people, and their children, for success and corrects some of the injustices brought on by the discriminatory "war on drugs."

## **Enhance Access to SNAP (EATS) Act of 2023 (S. 1488/H.R. 3138)**

The EATS Act of 2023, introduced by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), permanently expands access to SNAP for students enrolled in college at least half-time. The bill eliminates work-for-food programs and allows students to qualify for SNAP if they are eligible for work-study programs or have an expected family contribution of \$0. The EATS Act could help as many of 4 million students access SNAP benefits.

## **Puerto Rico Nutrition Assistance Fairness Act of 2023 (S. 949/H.R. 253)**

The Puerto Rico Nutrition Assistance Fairness Act, championed by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Rep. Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR), transitions Puerto Rico away from its current block grant funding structure for SNAP and allows the commonwealth's people to fully participate in the program. Puerto Rico's child poverty rate sits at 57%, and this legislation ensures that those children have equal access to the nutrition assistance they need.