



*The Independent Voice for Kentucky's Children*

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**Press Release**

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**More than 30 Kentucky Organizations Urge Congress to Protect SNAP Program**

Over 2,500 Organizations Across the Country Have Signed a Letter Addressed to Congress

**Jeffersontown, KY** - More than 2,500 national, state, and local organizations joined in a letter sent to Congress today to urge Members to oppose proposals that cut or dismantle the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps). The letter, circulated by the National Anti-Hunger Organizations (NAHO), is being delivered to every member of Congress and the White House. The letter includes signatures from more than 30 organizations in Kentucky.

Some recent deficit reduction proposals in Congress, particularly the House-passed (but Senate-rejected) "Ryan budget" plan, would make fundamental changes to SNAP by converting it into a "block grant" program and making drastic cuts to funding. The letter pointed out that such changes would harm millions of Americans – resulting in millions of people either being thrown out of the program or tens of millions seeing their already inadequate benefit levels reduced to the point that they would run out of food as soon as halfway through the month.

The letter and list of signatures can be found online here ([pdf](#)). The letter describes the great strengths of the program that such proposals would undermine:

- As millions of people became newly unemployed or underemployed in the 2008-2011 period, the program responded quickly to provide desperately needed help in the downturn.
- Targeted to go to the neediest people in our country, 93 percent of benefits go to households with incomes below the poverty line – including millions of working poor families. One-third of SNAP participants are in households that include senior citizens or people with disabilities, and three-quarters of participants are in families with children.
- The program keeps hunger at bay and lifts many households out of deep poverty. The most recent Census Bureau poverty report noted that SNAP benefits – if counted as income – would have lifted 3.6 million people above the poverty line in 2009.
- SNAP efficiently uses existing commercial food distribution channels to avert hunger.

- Recent months have seen natural disasters in a dozen states. In those situations as well, SNAP responds quickly and effectively to meet the increased need and help households that lose nearly everything in disasters.

Structural changes – a block grant or “global” spending cap cuts – or budget cuts would end these strengths, harm vulnerable Americans, and harm American agriculture, retailers, and the food industry.

The bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform (“the Simpson-Bowles deficit commission”) ended with a bipartisan vote for a plan that explicitly recommended not making fundamental policy changes to programs, like SNAP, that provide vital support to low-income people.

“SNAP kept children and families across Kentucky from going hungry in the middle of one of the worst recessions this country has ever seen, and has been a lifeline for those impacted by recent natural disasters,” said Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates. “It’s a program that works, and one that Congress and the President must protect.”

“If SNAP is weakened, it would harm tens of millions of children, seniors, and working-age adults, increase poverty and hunger, damage our education and health systems, create havoc with state and federal budgets, and weaken the economy,” said Jim Weill, President of the Food Research and Action Center. “More than 2,500 organizations are telling Congress that this is the wrong path to take.”

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*[Kentucky Youth Advocates](http://www.kyyouth.org) is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.*