



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

August 14, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable K. Michael Conaway
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Agriculture
1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Roberts and Conaway, and Ranking Members Stabenow and Peterson,

As the Farm Bill enters into House-Senate conference, the undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) urge you to continue the longstanding bipartisan commitment to protect and strengthen the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We urge the conference to reject any proposals to restrict eligibility, reduce benefits, cap or reduce funding, or make harmful structural changes to SNAP.

CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

In the United States, all too often food insecurity and disability go together. Families that include people with disabilities are *two to three times more likely* to experience food insecurity than families that have no members with disabilities.¹ Similarly, people experiencing food insecurity have increased likelihood of chronic illness and disability.

SNAP is vitally important for people with disabilities and their families. By increasing access to adequate, nutritious food SNAP plays a key role in reducing hunger and helping people with disabilities to maximize their health and participate in their communities.

- Using an inclusive definition of “disability,” in 2015 an estimated 11 million people with disabilities of all ages received SNAP, representing roughly one in four SNAP participants.²

- Roughly 4.4 million households with non-elderly adults with disabilities received SNAP in 2016.³
- Non-elderly adults with disabilities who receive SNAP have very low incomes, averaging only about \$12,000 per year in 2016.⁴
- SNAP benefits are extremely modest, averaging \$187 per month for non-elderly people with disabilities in 2016 – or just \$6 per day.⁵

Existing SNAP time limits are harsh, unfair, and harm many people with disabilities and their families by cutting off essential food assistance. Federal law currently limits SNAP eligibility for adults between the ages of 18 to 49 without dependents to just three months out of every three years – unless they can engage in work or job training activities at least half time or qualify for an exemption. These provisions cut off food assistance at a time when people need it most and do not result in increased employment and earnings. At least 500,000 low-income individuals nationwide lost SNAP in 2016 due to this time limit.⁶

Many people with disabilities are already hurt by SNAP time limits, despite existing exemptions for people who receive governmental or private benefits on the basis of a disability or are able to document that they are “physically or mentally unfit for employment.”⁷ For example, in a study of SNAP participants subject to time limits referred to participate in work activities in Franklin County, Ohio, one-third reported a “physical or mental limitation”.⁸

Cutting off food assistance from SNAP would only make it harder for people to work and increase their economic self-sufficiency, including people with disabilities and their families.

For these reasons, the undersigned CCD members urge the House-Senate conference committee to work on a bipartisan basis to strengthen and protect SNAP as part of the Farm Bill, and to reject any proposals that would weaken SNAP’s effectiveness as our nation’s foremost anti-hunger program by limiting access, reducing benefits, or creating administrative hurdles.

Sincerely,

CCD members:

ACCSSES
 Allies for Independence
 American Association of People with Disabilities
 American Association on Health and Disability
 American Diabetes Association
 American Foundation for the Blind
 American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)
 American Psychological Association
 American Therapeutic Recreation Association
 Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
 Autism Society
 Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Brain Injury Association of America
Center for Public Representation
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Community Legal Services of Philadelphia
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)
Easterseals
Epilepsy Foundation
Institute for Educational Leadership
The Jewish Federations of North America
Justice in Aging
Lutheran Services in America Disability Network
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Disability Institute
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR)
School Social Work Association of America
SourceAmerica
TASH
The Arc of the United States
United Spinal Association

Joined by:

Lakeshore Foundation

cc: Members, House-Senate conference committee on the Farm Bill

¹ Carlson, Steven, Keith-Jennings, Brynne, and Chaudhry, Raheem (2017). *SNAP Provides Needed Food Assistance to Millions of People with Disabilities*. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP). <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-provides-needed-food-assistance-to-millions-of-people-with>.

² Ibid. CBPP analyzed data from the National Health Interview Survey, which looks at disability more inclusively than the relatively narrow SNAP program definitions of “disability” used by the USDA to identify people with disabilities for administrative purposes. In 2015, USDA administrative data identified 5.3 million SNAP recipients with disabilities.

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2017). *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2016*. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/ops/Characteristics2016.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2018). *Policy Basics: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/policy-basics-the-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>.

⁷ 7 C.F.R. § 273.24(c)(2).

⁸ Ohio Association of Foodbanks. (2015). *Work Experience Program, Franklin County Comprehensive Report: Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents 2014-2015*. http://admin.ohiofoodbanks.org/uploads/news/ABAWD_Report_2014-2015-v3.pdf.