



UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
**AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,  
& FORESTRY**

U.S. SENATOR DEBBIE STABENOW, CHAIRWOMAN

## **Nutrition**

Just as the Farm Bill works to keep farmers farming, it also works to *keep families fed*. It is where we translate the American value of ensuring no one goes hungry into policy that helps millions of Americans across the country make ends meet during tough times. The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act strengthens access to nutrition programs, increases integrity and transparency, promotes access to work and pathways to self-sufficiency, and improves nutrition and healthy eating.

### **Helping Americans put Food on the Table:**

The bill ensures that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) continues to reflect the realities of how Americans buy and prepare food by continuing the 5-year update to the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) included in the bipartisan 2018 Farm Bill. The TFP determines how SNAP benefits are calculated. The 2021 update to the TFP amounted to an increase of roughly \$1.35 a day per person and provided the first meaningful update to SNAP benefits in almost 50 years, lifting 2.4 million people, including 1 million children, out of poverty.

About 41 million people – almost 80% of whom are children, seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans – use SNAP to buy food. SNAP, which averages about \$6 a day per person, reduces food insecurity by as much as 30% and benefits farmers and local economies across the country.

### **Additional investments in nutrition programs:**

- Removes the lifetime ban on nutrition assistance for individuals convicted of a drug related felony ensuring that people who have paid their debt to society can access SNAP and build pathways to self-sufficiency.
- Establishes a path for residents of Puerto Rico – who are American citizens – to participate in SNAP after more than 40 years of being excluded from the program.
- Addresses food insecurity among seniors through increased funding and key program changes.

- Strengthens Tribal nutrition programs by permanently allowing Tribes to procure their own food to distribute through the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDIPR).
- Allows former foster youth in higher education to more easily access SNAP and directs universities to connect students to nutrition assistance resources so students can focus on the future and not where they will get their next meal.
- Excludes the military basic allowance for housing from counting towards SNAP in order to support military families.
- Increases funding for food banks, which are a key tool to fight hunger, increases access to culturally appropriate food (including Kosher and Halal), and increases funding for the Farm to Food Bank program to reduce food waste and feed people in need.
- Improves training for health care professionals on SNAP so they can better care for their patients in need.
- Explores allowing hot foods like rotisserie chicken to be purchased with SNAP benefits to provide more options – particularly for seniors, people with a disability or experiencing homelessness or those who lack access to a kitchen or cooking equipment.

### **Increasing Integrity and Transparency in Nutrition Programs:**

The bill includes new provisions to increase transparency and reporting on the Thrifty Food Plan evaluation, and it includes significant measures to crack down on bad actors to strengthen the integrity of nutrition assistance without jeopardizing food access. This will improve the security of SNAP cards and transactions to prevent fraud, reimburse households who have had their SNAP benefits stolen through no fault of their own, and hold states accountable for complying with these security measures to protect SNAP households.

### **Supporting Pathways to Work and Self-Sufficiency:**

The bill supports people on their path to finding long-term, sustainable jobs by improving the SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T). It ensures that the income earned through SNAP E&T does not make workers ineligible for SNAP so they can complete the program and find employment. It also ensures that

people are informed about these job training opportunities, are referred to programs that fit their needs, and that funding is targeted to successful programs serving high need populations.

**Improving Nutrition Security and Healthy Eating:**

The bill increases funding for nutrition education by providing the tools and information to help people eat healthier meals and lead physically active lifestyles tailored to the needs of the community. In order to overcome the barriers to accessing healthy food, the bill increases funding for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative.

The bill increases funding and expands the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) and Produce Prescriptions so that more communities can access more fruits and vegetables. Incentivizing healthy food purchases is a powerful way to improve eating habits while maintaining the dignity of choice for families. The bill also provides more variety in the types of dairy products that can be purchased through the Healthy Fluid Milk Incentive Project established in the 2018 Farm Bill.

The bill also increases access to fruits and vegetables at food banks by providing new flexibility and more options for geographically isolated states and territories to buy food locally. Finally, the bill establishes a Nutrition Security Report directing the U.S. Department of Agriculture to measure whether Americans have access to healthy food.