

THE  
*Episcopal*  
CHURCH

**School Meals and SNAP Funding: Why it matters.**

In a nation of great wealth and resources, no child should ever go hungry. There are 42 million people in the U.S.—13 million of them children and over 5 million of them seniors—living in households struggling with hunger. Lack of access to nutritious food sets children apart at an early age, resulting in issues like lower test scores, decreased attention in the classroom, or sickness. Childhood hunger also has life-long negative impacts on a child’s development and growth stretching all the way into adulthood. Access to consistent and nutritious meals gives children the fundamental and necessary elements needed to grow, learn, love and play.

Parents and educators are no strangers to what is needed to support young people in their development, and it all begins with good nutrition. For far too many, a school meal might be the only food a child receives in a day. This makes child nutrition programs critical, and they are increasingly threatened by tighter federal budgets.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as Food Stamps) is one of the most effective government responses to address food insecurity and poverty. When members of our community become unemployed or experience unexpected economic hardship, they can apply for SNAP benefits and receive them quickly and efficiently to ensure children and working families don’t experience a hunger gap. Despite an improving economy, the need remains high. SNAP lifted 4.6 million Americans above the poverty line in 2015, according to the Census Bureau’s Supplemental Poverty Measure.

Both the House of Representatives and the White House have put forward proposals that would make drastic cuts to programs that feed poor and hungry children in our schools and provide food assistance to struggling working families in our communities. Some of the harshest cuts include:

- \$1.6 billion cut from the Community Eligibility Provision for school lunch and breakfasts in high-poverty schools affecting some 3.8 million students currently benefiting from the provision and preventing another 6.2 million students from access.

**We urge Congress to retain the Community Eligibility Provision in the FY18 Budget Resolution.**

- Converting SNAP funding to a “block-grant” funding structure that could mean an additional \$150 billion in cuts to the program.

**We urge Congress to oppose any structural changes that would block-grant SNAP.**

- \$10 billion in cuts over 10 years to SNAP reducing food assistance to scores of children, low-wage working families, seniors and disabled members of our communities.

**We urge Congress to reject cuts to SNAP in the FY18 Budget Resolution.**

- It is time for the Administration and Congress to recommit our nation to one of its most important bipartisan beliefs.

**We call on the Administration and Congress to commit to ensuring that no one in this country go hungry.**

***Learn more:***

U.S. Census Bureau: “[Income and Poverty in the United States: 2015](#)”

Food Action and Resource Center: [Statement on Budget Resolution Proposals](#)

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