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Dear Senator:

On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association and the 50 million students they serve, we strongly urge you to VOTE YES on the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (S. 3042). This bi-partisan bill reflects the importance of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in providing critical nutrition assistance to millions of households across our nation by maintaining the program's core structure and benefit levels. Votes associated with this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 115th Congress.

SNAP is our nation's largest anti-hunger program. By providing monthly benefits to eligible low-income people to purchase food, SNAP plays a critical role in reducing hunger, malnutrition, and poverty, and improving family security, child and adult health, and employment. SNAP reaches key vulnerable populations — 78 percent of SNAP households include a child, an elderly person, or a person with disabilities; 84 percent of all SNAP benefits go to such households. SNAP lifted 3.6 million Americans out of poverty in 2016, according to the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure. By providing much needed economic support, SNAP allows families to have sufficient nutrition during times of unemployment, fluctuating incomes, and low-wage work.

Children living in households that receive SNAP benefits are automatically certified to receive free school meals. The healthy meals that low-income children receive at school fight hunger, improve academic performance, and help reduce absenteeism, tardiness, and discipline referrals. According to the Food Research and Action Center, linking children in SNAP households to school meals is so important that Congress required *all* school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program to directly certify their students for free school meals.

We urge you to support the Senate's Farm Bill, and oppose any amendments that would make it more difficult for SNAP participants to receive critical nutrition benefits, and any amendments that roll back healthy guidelines for school meals.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association