

December 2, 2024

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Scott
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Scott:

As representatives of anti-poverty, employment training, food security, reentry and civil rights organizations from across the country we write today to respectfully urge passage of a bipartisan farm bill. The signers of this letter provide essential services to underserved and at-risk populations who rely on nutrition and employment training programs (like SNAP and SNAP Employment & Training) within the farm bill to sustain their livelihood and support them in reaching a level of self-sufficiency that does not require ongoing government support.

We appreciate your bipartisan efforts on the farm bill thus far, especially around inclusion of legislation that sets underserved families up for long-term success by addressing food insecurity and employment and training accessibility issues. These essential needs are closely intertwined and require swift attention to meet the increasing hunger and financial instability crises faced by vulnerable populations – populations who can’t wait any longer for access to nutrition and employment assistance.

For example:

- The most recent [Household Food Security report](#) from USDA found that 47.4 million people lived in households experiencing food insecurity last year;
- [20% of formerly incarcerated people](#) report suffering from food insecurity - double that of the general population– with even higher rates among formerly incarcerated women and Black individuals;
- For youth impacted by the foster care system, only [50 percent are employed](#) by age 24 when they age out and [25% report “high” food insecurity](#);
- While three-quarters of [single mothers](#) are working, those working full time have a typical annual income of \$40,000 and overall single mothers have a 28% poverty rate;
- Approximately [60% of formerly incarcerated individuals](#) struggle with unemployment;
- During an economic downturn, each SNAP dollar generates [\\$1.54 in economic activity](#).

Several pieces of legislation in this year’s farm bill help to alleviate food and financial insecurity for vulnerable populations. One such bill is the *RESTORE Act of 2023* ([H.R.3479](#) and [S.1753](#)) which would remove the national lifetime ban from SNAP for individuals with felony drug convictions. Everyone should have access to food, and punishing individuals by restricting this

access does nothing to improve public safety or discourage unhealthy behavior. With, [91% of individuals](#) suffering from food insecurity upon release from incarceration, it is imperative that Congress ensure equal access to food benefits regardless of one's past.

Another piece of bipartisan legislation we are excited to see included is the *Training & Nutrition Stability Act* ([H.R.3087](#) and [S.3190](#)) which would allow individuals to maintain their SNAP food benefits while enrolled in federally funded paid job training programs, like SNAP E&T, so they no longer have to choose between immediate food security and investing in training opportunities that will set them up for long-term self-sufficiency. With over [120 organizations in support of this Act](#), and employers looking to hire, now is the time to support job seekers on their path to gainful employment by ensuring they have all of the tools necessary to become productive neighbors in our communities.

Historically, the farm bill has created a foundation for bipartisanship that addresses both farm and food security and strengthens programs like SNAP and SNAP E&T. Individuals utilizing these programs are working to support themselves and their loved ones, however, significant disparities still persist: [Black Americans and American Indians](#) have the lowest rates of upward mobility and are most likely to experience downward mobility. Additionally, there are overall [higher food insecurity rates](#) for single-parent households headed by women, as well as Black and Latino households.

We must protect SNAP and SNAP E&T, by not cutting these programs, and eliminate barriers to accessing these programs in an effort to rectify these disparities. Strong communities and individuals need reliable and accessible food security and training opportunities, and our constituents striving for stability and self-sufficiency need a farm bill that helps them get there.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and please do not hesitate to contact Leah Bacon at lebacon@ceoworks.org should you have any questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

America Forward

Appetite for Change

Cara Collective

Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)

Chrysalis

Citizens for Prison Reform

Conservation Corps of Long Beach

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)

Crossroads Campus

Washington, DC

Minneapolis, MN

Chicago, IL

New York, NY

Los Angeles, CA

Lansing, MI

Long Beach, CA

Indianapolis, IN

Nashville, TN

<i>Downtown Women's Center</i>	<i>Los Angeles, CA</i>
<i>FareStart</i>	<i>Seattle, WA</i>
<i>Farming Hope</i>	<i>San Francisco, CA</i>
<i>Housed-Up, Inc. *</i>	<i>Fayetteville, WV</i>
<i>Jobs for the Future (JFF)</i>	<i>New Haven, CT</i>
<i>Juma Ventures</i>	<i>San Francisco, CA</i>
<i>JusticeLink</i>	<i>Tulsa, OK</i>
<i>JustLeadership USA</i>	<i>New York, NY</i>
<i>Hillbilly Harvest Co.</i>	<i>Morgantown, WV</i>
<i>Homeward Bound of Marin</i>	<i>Novato, CA</i>
<i>Landforce</i>	<i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>
<i>Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP)</i>	<i>Beverly, MA</i>
<i>Legal Action Center</i>	<i>New York, NY</i>
<i>LIFT Inc</i>	<i>CA, DC, IL, NY</i>
<i>Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)</i>	<i>New York, NY</i>
<i>Michigan Collaborative to End Mass Incarceration</i>	<i>Lansing, MI</i>
<i>Michigan League for Public Policy</i>	<i>Lansing, MI</i>
<i>MI-CURE</i>	<i>Kalamazoo, MI</i>
<i>Mississippi Center for Reentry</i>	<i>Southaven, MS</i>
<i>Nation Outside</i>	<i>Southfield, MI</i>
<i>National Skills Coalition *</i>	<i>Washington, DC</i>
<i>NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice</i>	<i>Washington, DC</i>
<i>New Moms</i>	<i>Chicago, IL</i>
<i>New York City Employment and Training Coalition</i>	<i>New York, NY</i>
<i>Northern Valley Industries</i>	<i>Wausau, WI</i>
<i>Ohio Association of Foodbanks</i>	<i>Columbus, OH</i>
<i>Orion</i>	<i>Auburn, WA</i>
<i>Per Scholas</i>	<i>Bronx, NY</i>
<i>Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens</i>	<i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>
<i>Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG)</i>	<i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>

** indicates organizations who signed on to this letter after it was distributed to Agriculture Committee leadership on Dec 2, 2024*

<i>REDF</i>	<i>San Francisco, CA</i>
<i>Reimagine Appalachia</i>	<i>Ohio River Valley (KY, OH, PA, WV)</i>
<i>Repowered</i>	<i>St. Paul, MN</i>
<i>Rise Up WV *</i>	<i>Charleston, WV</i>
<i>Safe & Just Michigan (SJM)</i>	<i>Lansing, MI</i>
<i>Safer Foundation</i>	<i>Chicago, IL</i>
<i>SE Ohio Foodbank</i>	<i>Logan, OH</i>
<i>The Foodbank, Inc.</i>	<i>Dayton, OH</i>
<i>The Fortune Society</i>	<i>Long Island City, NY</i>
<i>Treatment Communities of America</i>	<i>Washington, DC</i>
<i>Valeo Vocation</i>	<i>Tacoma, WA</i>
<i>Vehicles for Change</i>	<i>Baltimore, MD</i>
<i>West Ohio Food Bank</i>	<i>Lima, OH</i>
<i>Women's Bean Project</i>	<i>Denver, CO</i>
<i>Workforce, Inc.</i>	<i>Indianapolis, IN</i>