

Strengthening SNAP Benefit Adequacy and Equitable Access

The Closing the Meal Gap Act championed by Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) will boost Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for all participants and make further improvements. SNAP benefit adequacy will be improved by replacing the Thrifty Food Plan with the more appropriate Low-Cost Food Plan as the basis for SNAP allotments; eliminating the cap on the SNAP Excess Shelter Deduction; and streamlining SNAP Standard Excess Medical Deductions for persons who are older or have disabilities (with a minimum standard of \$140). These changes will ease choices too many people face between paying for food and rent or between paying for food and medicine.

The Improving Access to Nutrition Act championed by Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) would eliminate three-month time limits on SNAP eligibility for certain working-age adults who cannot document sufficient hours of work. The current law provision takes food off the table of unemployed and underemployed people. The proposal is a long overdue and permanent law change that will promote food security and equity for Americans with low incomes.

The Enhanced Access to SNAP Act (EATS Act) championed by Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA) and Sen. Gillibrand would put college students with lower incomes on an equal footing with other people in qualifying for SNAP. SNAP would no longer condition eligibility for most people attending college at least half time on performing work study, or 20 hours or more per week of outside employment.

The SNAP Plus Act championed by Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY) would permanently end the prohibition on use of SNAP benefits to purchase hot prepared foods from food retailers. The proposed change would afford SNAP customers broader choices available to other food shoppers.



The Lift the Bar Act championed by Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) seeks to restore access to public programs for lawfully present immigrants by removing the five-year waiting period and other restrictions to SNAP eligibility. The proposal also would remove that waiting period in Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program.

Additional proposals would provide more equitable access to SNAP, including for residents of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as for formerly incarcerated individuals.