



Date: June 10, 2025

To: Chair Irwin and Members of the Senate Housing and Human Services Committee

From: Monique Stanton, President and CEO, Michigan League for Public Policy

Subject: Opposition to Cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

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Good afternoon, Chair Irwin and members of the Senate Housing and Human Services Committee. My name is Monique Stanton, President and CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy. The League is a nonpartisan research and advocacy organization that promotes economic opportunity for all and analyzes the impact of public policy on the lives of Michiganders who have been systemically left out of prosperity. The League is also the state's Kids Count organization, working as part of a national effort to measure the well-being of children at the state and local levels and to shape efforts that improve their lives.

We thank the committee for this opportunity to share the devastating impact that a proposed cut to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will have on the people of Michigan.

SNAP is a vital support for struggling families in rural and urban communities alike. The program supports children, older adults, disabled people and millions of Americans who work in jobs that don't pay enough to cover basic needs. It's also one of our most effective tools in improving health outcomes and reining in health care spending.

Ninety-two percent of Americans say they are concerned about the price of food and consumer goods, and most say that high food costs in recent years have made healthy eating difficult.

SNAP caseloads are high compared to before the pandemic, having risen by 21% for the state and much more in specific communities. For example, the largest increases have been in Osceola County (43%) and Ottawa County (51%).

Recent polling from Data for Progress shows that SNAP cuts are deeply unpopular across the nation. Here in Michigan, 89% of voters believe we should maintain or increase SNAP funding. Despite the overwhelming public support for SNAP, Congress is considering a cut of nearly \$300 billion — the largest in the program's history — to help pay for tax cuts for the wealthy.

The House-passed plan would saddle states with massive costs, forcing officials to choose between raising taxes and cutting services. Michigan could now be on the hook for up to 25% of

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the cost of SNAP benefits. This would equal \$761 million for just one year — about 80% of the entire 2025 budget of the Michigan State Police.

Additionally, the House bill would: subject even more people to a harsh time limit unless they prove that they're working at least 80 hours per month; make it harder for states to waive the time limit during an economic downturn; make it harder to update benefit levels to reflect the true cost of a healthy diet; and take food away from refugees, asylees and other immigrants who have been granted legal authorization to be here based on humanitarian concerns.

Healthy food is increasingly unaffordable, even for people working full time. Most SNAP participants who can work, do. Although they are some of our most essential workers, like health care aides, janitors, and cashiers, their wages typically haven't kept pace with the cost of living. Many adults who aren't paid enough to afford food work for some of the world's largest, most profitable companies, such as Walmart, McDonald's and Amazon.

More than half of wage-earning SNAP participants are year-round, full-time workers. Another 21% work full time, but for only part of the year. That's because industries that employ them — including agriculture, grocery retail and other sectors within the food system — tend to have unpredictable schedules, high displacement and seasonal volatility.

Currently, SNAP limits adults ages 18 through 54 without disabilities or children in their homes to three months of benefits every three years, unless they prove they're working at least 80 hours per month. The time limit unfairly penalizes workers for job losses or work hour fluctuations beyond their control, taking food away just when families need it most.

Yet, the House-passed bill seeks to apply the time limit to older adults (who are more likely to face discrimination in the job market and have work-limiting disabilities) and people with school-age children (who may not be able to afford child care or find a job with the flexibility needed to accommodate children's schedules).

Taking food away does nothing to help people find jobs more quickly. Instead, it punishes many who are actually working with unnecessary red tape.

A huge cut to SNAP could also compromise food access for everyone. Shoppers using SNAP strengthen every step in our food supply chain, from the farm to the grocery store. In Michigan, nearly 13,500 workers in grocery and related industries earn a collective \$1 billion in wages every year because of SNAP dollars. SNAP is linked to \$2 billion in total output across these industries, as well as \$148 million in federal, state and local taxes. SNAP plays an outsized role in rural communities, where those dollars are critical to the survival of independent grocery stores and the prevention of food deserts.

Hunger is on the rise in Michigan and our local food banks are already straining to meet the need in our communities. For every one meal food banks provide, SNAP provides nine. We cannot food bank our way out of the hunger a cut of this size will cause.

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Communities of color, seniors, families with children, and people with disabilities would be hit hardest. Rural access to healthy food is already limited, and these cuts would only deepen the divide — especially in northern Michigan, where people are disproportionately older and disabled.

Food is one of our most basic needs, essential for people to stay healthy, do well in school and earn a living. As the nation's largest and most effective nutrition program, SNAP is vital to your constituents and our economy. We urge you to join us in fighting to protect and strengthen it.