



1201 16th St, N.W. | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*President*

Princess R. Moss  
*Vice President*

Noel Candelaria  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

Kim A. Anderson  
*Executive Director*

May 20, 2024

Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association, who teach and support nearly 50 million students in public schools across America, we urge you to vote **NO** on the Farm, Food, and National Security Act 2024, the reauthorization legislation for the farm bill. Votes related to this issue may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 118th Congress.

**We oppose the bill because of proposed changes to the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP)—that will weaken the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and erode benefits for participants.**

NEA members are teachers and education support professionals in 14,000 communities throughout urban, suburban, and rural America. These educators know firsthand that hungry students cannot focus on learning. We urge you to strengthen SNAP so that it will improve low-income families' health and well-being and help prepare students for learning.

Approximately two-thirds of SNAP households include a child, an older person, or an individual with a disability, [according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities \(CBPP\)](#). Many working-age SNAP recipients hold multiple low-paying jobs with unreliable hours and paltry benefits, or no benefits at all. For them, any unexpected expense, health crisis, or other emergency could mean choosing between buying groceries and paying a bill. Among these recipients are approximately 10 percent of education support professionals and approximately 16 percent of school food service professionals—workers who are dedicated to nurturing students and providing them with healthy meals, but struggle to feed their own families. Like these hardworking education support professionals, 70 percent of adult SNAP recipients hold at least one job, [according to a Government Accountability Office report](#).

Because SNAP is the first line of defense against childhood hunger, the NEA strongly opposes the bill's proposal to cut the program by approximately \$30 billion over 10 years, through limiting the U.S. Department of Agriculture's authority to adjust the TFP. This proposal—which would impact as many as 17 million children in a typical month, [according to the CBPP](#)—would undercut the TFP's ability to accurately reflect the cost of a healthy diet, eroding benefits and narrowing families' access to fresh fruits and vegetables amid rising prices.

This change would further impact programs that are tied to the Thrifty Food Plan. NEA is particularly concerned about the impact on the new Summer EBT Program, which provides grocery benefits to children in low-income families during the summer when schools are closed. The summer program would be [cut by more than \\$500 million over the 2027-2033 period](#) due to the TFP change, the CBPP estimates.

While the bill contains some provisions that NEA supports, such as lifting the drug felony ban, improvements to the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, and extending the Secure Rural Schools program, these are insufficient to make up for such a large and long-term cut to SNAP.

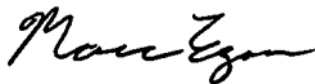
Instead of undermining SNAP, we ask you to be guided by NEA's priorities for reauthorization, which include strengthening the program by removing the shelter deduction cap and time limits on eligibility, enacting a standard deduction for medical expenses, and aligning SNAP's eligibility standards with the Affordable Care Act to allow lawfully present immigrants and permanent residents to participate in SNAP.

NEA also supports efforts to ensure that the work to cultivate, process, and secure the food supply chain is respected. NEA seeks a farm bill that ensures workers are paid a living wage, employers maintain safe working conditions, and employers support workers' right to organize in order to have a say in the conditions of their employment. This bill ignores these needs. In fact, the bill undermines labor. **NEA further opposes the bill's privatization provision because it would permit the outsourcing of SNAP eligibility determinations, affecting the merit staff employees who administer SNAP.**

SNAP is our nation's largest anti-hunger program. For many families, it means the difference between eating and going without. All students deserve important nutritional support to learn. Robust SNAP benefits not only provide struggling families with a crucial safety net; they are also instrumental in creating the conditions for academic engagement and achievement.

We must urge you to vote NO on the Farm, Food, and National Security Act 2024 as currently written. We also ask that you support amendments that would strengthen the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and oppose all amendments that would weaken the program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Marc" and "Egan" being capitalized and prominent.

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association