

# Farm Bill & SNAP in New York

## What's at Stake and How to Take Action

April 27, 2018

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# Presenters:

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Ron Deutsch – Fiscal Policy Institute

Triada Stampas – Food Bank For New York City

Sherry Tomasky – Hunger Solutions New York

Joel Berg – Hunger Free America

# Housekeeping

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- All lines will remain muted
- Please use chat function to send questions to panelists throughout presentation
- “Raise Hand” at the end to be individually unmuted during Q&A
- Webinar will be recorded and links to recording and slides will be sent to all registrants

# Quick History of SNAP

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- SNAP began in 1964 as the Food Stamp Program as part of the War on Poverty/Great Society began by President Johnson
- SNAP is part of the Farm Bill which authorizes most federal policies governing food and agriculture programs
- Welfare Reform in 1996 molded the SNAP program into much of its current form with welfare-to-work requirements and other restrictions
- SNAP participation rates hit an all-time high during the 2008 Recession

# About the Farm Bill

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- Farm Bill is reauthorized every five years and allows policy-makers a chance to review programs, consider changes, and address implementation barriers
- About 80 percent of the entire bill focuses solely on nutrition programs
- The other 20 percent is for crop insurance, subsidies, and other agriculture-related programs
- Majority of the Farm Bill is authorized through mandatory spending, including SNAP
- House Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition released 2018 Farm Bill proposal earlier this month with numerous cuts and changes to SNAP

# What's in the 2018 Farm Bill?

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- Large benefit cuts would cause more than 1 million low-income households (about 2 million individuals) to lose their benefits altogether or have them reduced, further increasing food insecurity across the country
- Includes sweeping, aggressive new work requirements despite the fact that research and past experience suggests that proposed work requirements would leave many low-income people with neither earnings nor food assistance because of barriers to employment
- Imposes significant new state mandates and roll back numerous areas of state flexibility that were designed to streamline and modernize program operations and make the program easier for states to administer

# SNAP Cuts and Changes In the Farm Bill

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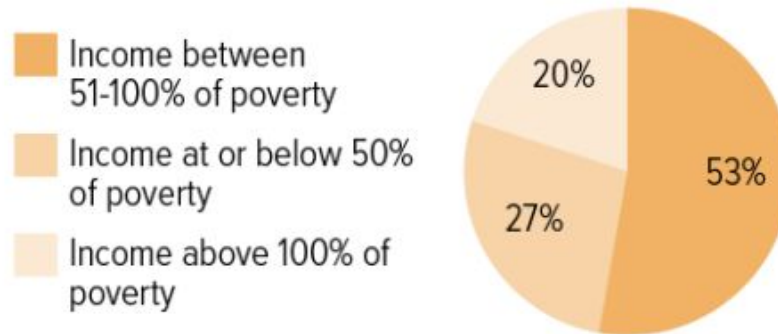
- SNAP benefit cuts average around \$23.1 billion over next 10 years
- Diverts much of that \$23.1 billion to a risky new scheme of ineffective work programs and unforgiving penalties that would take food assistance away from those who don't meet the new work requirements
- To that end, the ineffective “work programs” are underfunded and will likely fail to help people find jobs and only take food assistance away from struggling families
- Even the helpful changes are paid for by SNAP cuts in the bill - so every improvement is at the cost of taking food off the tables of low-income families

# SNAP In NYS: Who Benefits?

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## Most SNAP Participants in New York Are Poor

Share of participants by household income, FY 2016

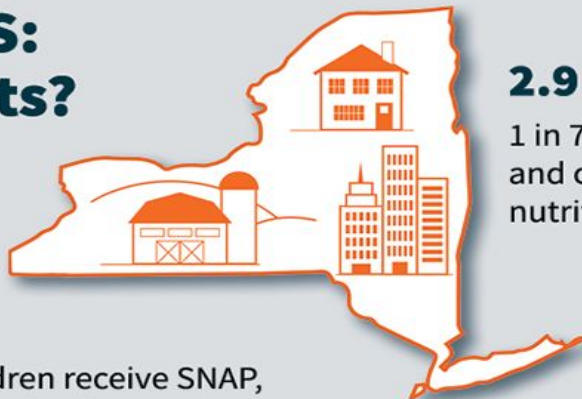


Source: CBPP analysis of FY 2016 USDA SNAP Household Characteristics data



# SNAP In NYS: Who Benefits?

## SNAP in NYS: Who Benefits?



### 2.9 Million New Yorkers

1 in 7 people—in rural areas, small towns, and cities—are able to purchase healthy nutritious food with SNAP



### Children

1.1 million children receive SNAP, reducing their risk of hunger and likelihood of malnutrition, which can cause developmental delays



### Retailers

More than 4.9 billion in SNAP benefits were spent at over 18,000 retailers, helping to sustain jobs



### Working Families

Among families receiving SNAP, almost 75% have at least one adult who has worked in the past year



### Veterans

67,000 veterans receive essential support from SNAP enabling them to purchase nutritious food



### Seniors

SNAP helps 630,000 seniors maintain good health and nutrition, saving on healthcare costs

# Cuts to SNAP Would Be Harmful Because...

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- Workers
- Older Workers
- Children
- Rural Communities
- People with Health Conditions and Caregivers
- Grocers and Retailers
- Most people who get SNAP and can work **DO** work
- The 3 month limit on childless individuals who aren't working is already in place in NY
- Children have better long-term health outcomes and perform better in school when they don't go hungry
- SNAP pumps **billions into local economies** every year and cutting it doesn't just take away food from families, it takes away business from local retailers and grocers

# Cuts to SNAP Are Unworkable Because...

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- Pushes much of the bureaucratic legwork onto the states, requiring them to track work hours AND offer them underfunded job training and education
- The job training program is severely underfunding (at \$1 billion), providing less than \$30/month per needed job training slot
- Operating effective, meaningful job programs that promote opportunity range from \$7,500 to \$14,000 per participant (certifications, etc.)
- This would ultimately be an unfunded mandate because in as NYS pushes more costs and responsibilities onto counties with tightening budgets then work programs will be ineffective

# Cuts to SNAP Are Untested Because...

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- The last Farm Bill had 10 states piloting innovative SNAP work and job training programs
- BUT the pilot programs will yield results in the next few years
- The 2018 Farm Bill mandates that all states institute sweeping changes without any evidence supporting their effectiveness
- This was a missed opportunity to work on a bipartisan basis to strengthen SNAP and to make meaningful investments

# CUTS TO SNAP ARE WASTEFUL BECAUSE...

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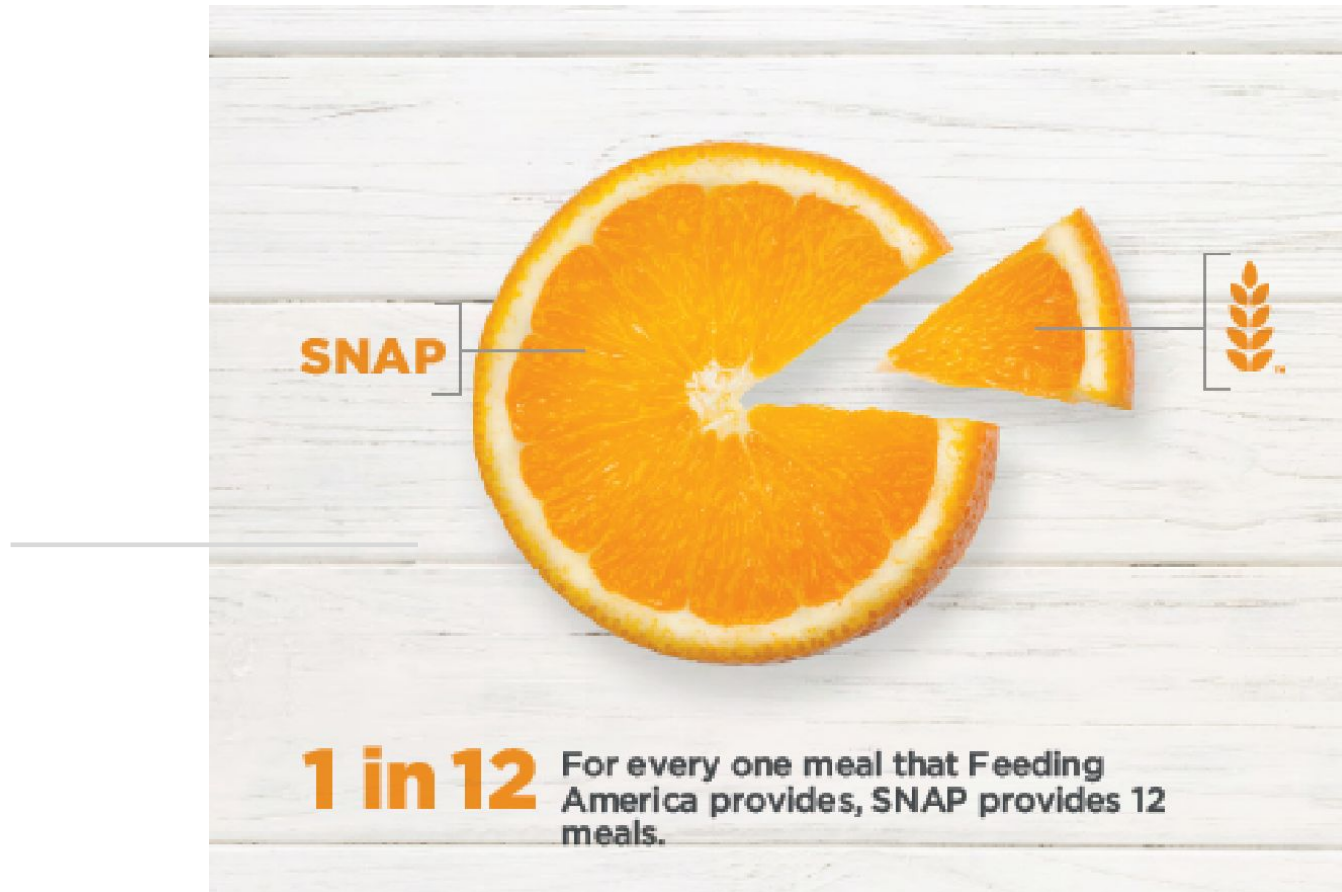
- Money provided for work programs in the bill would be largely spending on a system to track hours of employment and work program participation
- Many of those required to participate are simply between jobs and will find a job on their own soon without any intervention while others are unable to participate meaningfully because of health conditions or need to care for ill family members
- Limited resources will be wasted on employment services for those who don't need them, services for those who can't benefit from them, and a new bureaucratic system to track it all
- Past experience shows that work requirements rarely lead to significant increases in employment and often result in increased poverty for those who lose benefits
- A better use of increased employment and training resources would be to serve recipients ready to take advantage of employment services because they are struggling in the labor market (not between jobs)

# What Would Cuts to SNAP Look Like in NYS?

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- Number of non-disabled adults without children under 6 in a typical month of FY2016: **544,000 would be subject to work requirements**
- Number of non-disabled adults without children under 6 not working 20 hours per week in a typical month of FY2016: **395,000 would be subject to work requirements**
- Estimated SNAP Employment and Training Grant to NYS: **\$53,570,000**
- Categorical eligibility rollback: **up to 45,000 Households could lose eligibility - HH with school-age children would lose automatic eligibility for free school meals as a result**
- Benefits associated with “Heat & Eat” significantly reduced by requiring more paperwork – **avg \$90/month**

# Charity Can't Fill the Gap



Feeding America network of food banks = 4.2B meals/year

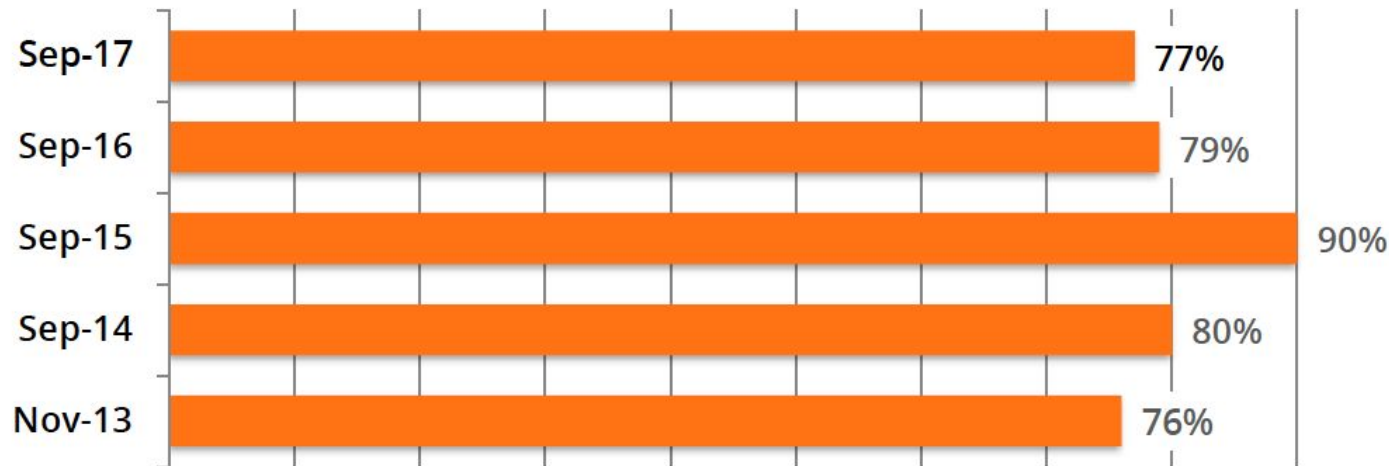
# Charity Can't Fill the Gap

NYS food banks = 200+ million meals/year

SNAP in NYS = 1.5+ BILLION meals/year

In NYC, past SNAP cuts have impacted emergency food

pro Percentages of food pantries and soup kitchens reporting increased visitor traffic have been consistently high since the Hunger Cliff.



Percentage of food pantries & soup kitchens reporting higher visitor traffic than in September 2013



# Spring 2018 is Critical

Farm Bill is due for reauthorization by Sep. 30 (or extension).

House Bill	Senate Bill
The House could vote on Agriculture Committee bill (H.R. 2) this spring. (week of 5/7?)	The content and timing for the Senate Agriculture Committee bill is being shaped now. Timing could be this spring.
The bill needs the majority of the House to pass.	Committee leaders say they want a bill that can get 60 (or 70) votes in the Senate
The Conference committee will work out differences between the House and Senate bills. The final bill would need approval in both the House and Senate.	

# All Members Matter

- Farm Bills need votes from diverse factions in Congress
- Bipartisan



- Urban, rural, and suburban
- Priorities around various titles and stakeholders
- Swing votes and the intensity of supporters matter

# NY Congressional Delegation

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1.	Zeldin	10.	Nadler	19.	Faso
2.	King	11.	Donovan	20.	Tonko
3.	Suozzi	12.	C. Maloney	21.	Stefanik
4.	Rice	13.	Espaillet	22.	Tenney
5.	Meeks	14.	Crowley	23.	Reed
6.	Meng	15.	Serrano	24.	Katko
7.	Velazquez	16.	Engel	25.	Vacant
8.	Jeffries	17.	Lowey	26.	Higgins
9.	Clarke	18.	S. Maloney	27.	Collins

# NY Congressional Delegation

## Democrats

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# For Democratic House members:

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Chairman Conaway's Farm Bill (H.R. 2) SNAP proposal includes harmful cuts and changes to SNAP. It would increase hunger and hardship by taking away—or cutting—food assistance from many struggling people in your district, including children in working families and older workers. Conaway's plans would expand SNAP's existing work requirements: This will do little to help people find jobs but will make it harder for millions of people to put food on the table—including parents raising kids, people with disabilities, older workers, low-wage workers, and people temporarily in between jobs.

**We ask you to strongly oppose this proposal.**

# NY Congressional Delegation Republicans

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1. **Zeldin**

2. **King**

3. Suozzi

4. Rice

5. Meeks

6. Meng

7. Velazquez

8. Jeffries

9. Clarke

10. Nadler

11. **Donovan**

12. C. Maloney

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21. **Stefanik**

22. **Tenney**

23. **Reed**

24. **Katko**

25. Vacant

26. Higgins

27. **Collins**

# For Republican House Agriculture Committee and moderate Republican members:

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Chairman Conaway's Farm Bill (H.R.2) proposal includes harmful cuts and changes to SNAP. It would increase hunger and hardship by taking away—or cutting—food assistance from many struggling Americans, including children in working families and older workers.

**We urge you to oppose this proposal and work with Chairman Conaway to pass a bipartisan Farm Bill that protects SNAP from harmful cuts and changes.**

# Senators Schumer and Gillibrand



*"I have serious concerns about the right wing's effort in the House to constrict families' and children's access to desperately needed food assistance," said Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer. "I will fight these cruel cuts, and will use my leverage as the Senate Democratic leader to protect New Yorkers who depend on this assistance every single day."*

*The GOP House plan "is only going to increase hunger in our communities" and "could kick millions of households off of the program," Gillibrand said on a conference call with reporters Tuesday. "I believe no New Yorker, no American, should ever have to suffer from hunger — especially a child."*



# Actions

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- Calls to district offices
  - Make your calls
  - Ask your network to call
  - Ask clients to call
  - Other influencers?
- Emails/letters to district offices
- District Office meetings during recess (April 30 – May 6)
- Lots of positive SNAP messages on social media
- Earned media (op-eds, editorials, LTE, news stories)

## Invest in SNAP to keep children and families

By Naomi Post, Commentary Published 9:10 pm, Monday, April 23, 2018

The Farm Bill under consideration in Congress endangers child health and nutrition across the Capital Region and Hudson Valley. The bill includes provisions that impact a range of issues, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and school meal programs for low-income individuals.

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## Don't put nutrition assistance

Paul A. Stermer and Linda Bopp, Valley Views Published 1:04 p.m. ET April 13, 2018



(Photo: Courtesy photo)

When you think about helping people who are hungry, the image that might come to mind is the work done at the Food Bank of the Hudson Valley and the nearly 400 food pantries, soup kitchens and other agencies who work with us to provide food to thousands of people who might otherwise go without. It is a comfort to know that when people in our community face hardship, they have somewhere to turn.

But the support the Food Bank provides can only go so far. Many of the people who benefit from the Food Bank also use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, to help put

# The Ithaca Voice

## Opinion: Southern Tier Food Bank opposes potential cuts to SNAP program

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, ITHACA, NEWS, TOP / APRIL 13, 2018 / BY GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

ITHACA, N.Y. — "The Food Bank of the Southern Tier is dismayed at language included in the 2018 Farm Bill by the House Agriculture Committee that would significantly reduce SNAP participation and food assistance.

Particularly, the deep cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will be devastating to our community, and there is no way charities like ours can make up the difference.

Our food bank is part of the fabric of our community and feeding neighbors in need is a shared responsibility. Each day we see the partnership reflected among our volunteers and donors. But the nonprofit sector cannot do this alone — for each meal provided by Feeding America's network, of which the Food Bank of the Southern Tier is a member, the SNAP program provides twelve.

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FROM THE USA TODAY NETWORK

## Join Feeding America's National Call in Day May 8:

- Use Feeding America's Toll Free Number to Call Congress May 8 to Urge a No Vote

**Call: 888-398-8702**

- Vote "No" on H.R. 2 and SNAP cuts.
- Support a Farm Bill that protects and strengthens SNAP.
- Reject a Farm Bill that cuts SNAP and takes food out of the refrigerators and off the tables of needy Americans.



# More Actions

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- Sign on to letter circulated by NY Farm Bureau (by 5/4) (link)
- NYC press conference, City Hall: April 30 @ 11am
- Feeding America national call in day: May 8
- What actions do you have planned?
  - “Raise Hand” and I can unmute you
  - Or, enter your comments in the chat box

# a few resources...

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- **Joel Berg on Farm Bill “Off-Kilter” Podcast**

<https://soundcloud.com/offkiltershow/farm-bill>

- **FRAC’s “Take Action” on Farm Bill**

<http://www.frac.org/action/snap-farm-bill>

- **CBPP: House Agriculture Committee’s Farm Bill Would Increase Food Insecurity and Hardship**

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/house-agriculture-committees-farm-bill-would-increase-food-insecurity-and>

- **AARP: SNAP helps millions of Older Adults Age 50+**

<https://www.aarp.org/ppi/info-2018/snap-provides-benefits-for-millions-of-adults-ages-50-and-older.html>

# Building up New York's Farm Bill coalition efforts with tools and resources

Watch for NY Farm Bill Google Group links in follow up email!

- Share resources
- calendar of events
- list serv

## Congressional District Fact Sheets on SNAP

<https://hungersolutionsny.org/snap-policy/snap-district-data-sheets/>

## SNAP and Farm Bill in NY

<https://hungersolutionsny.org/snap-policy/farmbill>

### SNAP Fights Hunger in New York Congressional District #1

#### In your district: 46,910 people face hunger.

SNAP fights hunger, improves health, responds to crisis, supports work, and bolsters local economies.



#### 14,428 Families

In rural areas, small towns, and cities are able to purchase healthy nutritious food with SNAP.



#### 22,020 Children

face hunger. 41% of families receiving SNAP include children. SNAP improves their health, ability to learn and thrive so they can become productive community members.



#### Working Families

Among families receiving SNAP, 77% include at least one adult who has worked in the past year.

#### Seniors and People with Disabilities

50% of families receiving SNAP include a senior and 53% include a person with a disability. SNAP helps them to maintain good health and nutrition, reducing health care costs.



#### Retailers

SNAP benefits were spent at 371 grocers, farmers' markets, and other authorized retailers, boosting the local economy and sustaining jobs.

For 40 years, SNAP has ensured that Americans don't go hungry. If SNAP is weakened, your district, New York State, and our nation will see more hunger, worse health and educational outcomes, and higher health costs.

**NO**  
Cuts

**NO**  
Block  
Grants

**NO**  
Structural  
Changes

**#SNAPMatters**



HUNGER SOLUTIONS  
NEW YORK

HungerSolutionsNY.org  

Funded by FRAC, The Walmart Foundation, and MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger.  
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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The House Agriculture Committee's 2018 Farm Bill should not break the long history of bipartisan commitment to ensure struggling families across the country have enough to eat.

Strengthening SNAP, not cutting it, is the right way forward.