

June 3, 2026

The Honorable John Boozman
Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Boozman and Ranking Member Klobuchar:

We write from concern that millions of low-income children are at risk of experiencing greater food insecurity unless Congress acts swiftly to **extend to all states the existing delay** in the looming SNAP cost shift to states in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Sixteen million children were in families that participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2024 to help obtain a complete and healthy diet. Participation in SNAP not only results in positive nutritional outcomes, it also supports long term health and educational outcomes that benefit children well into their adult lives.

Unfortunately, the cuts enacted in last year's budget bill (HR 1) are causing significant numbers of children to lose SNAP with more children expected to lose access absent Congressional action. We therefore urge you and your Committee members to ensure that any farm legislation that moves this year ensures that SNAP continues to support America's children by **extending the existing two-year delay in the cost shift included in P.L.119-21 to all states** to help them protect participation and reduce their SNAP error rate. **We also request that you delay the increased administrative match for all states** to prevent staffing shortages that will make it harder to implement the SNAP changes and provide assistance to families.

Addressing the looming cost shift is particularly urgent: new data from some states analyzed and released by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows an alarming trend of children losing SNAP since H.R. 1 was enacted, most likely the result of actions states are taking to address the impact of the upcoming cost shift. **Over 700,000 children have lost SNAP in just the 12 states that report participation changes among children.** Nationally, it's very likely this number is much higher. (The states include Arizona, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, South Dakota, and Texas.) The 700,000 children dropped from SNAP account for almost half of the 1.6 million-person-decline in total SNAP participation in those states, despite the fact that the bill did not target children for eligibility cuts.

These SNAP cost shifts threaten to exacerbate the unacceptable levels of hunger among children and their families, with long-term consequences including poor health and worse educational and economic outcomes. Children living in food insecure households are more likely to be hospitalized, to have low birthweight, to develop asthma and anemia, and to fall behind in school. Moreover, household food insecurity is consistently linked with parental depression, anxiety, and increased stress, which in turn impacts child behavior and development. Infants and toddlers, who are experiencing a rapid period of brain development, are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition and household-level stress. In 2024, nearly [one in five \(18 percent\) households with children under age six and approximately one in three \(34 percent\) of adults with children under age six experienced food insecurity](#).

SNAP is our nation's frontline defense against these consequences. Children in families participating in SNAP are less likely to be hospitalized, underweight, or at risk of developmental delays compared to likely eligible children not participating in SNAP. SNAP participation has been found to moderate the negative association [between hunger and educational outcomes for school-age children](#), suggesting that SNAP helps buffer kids from some of the academic harm of poverty. Studies also show that households participating in SNAP are less likely to be reported for child maltreatment or neglect, and that state-level expansions of food-assistance eligibility correlate with [fewer investigations by child protective services](#). But this progress is now at risk.

The SNAP participation declines are not occurring because of a stronger economy, because hunger has disappeared, or because hundreds of thousands of families with children were mistakenly receiving nutrition support. They are occurring because states are struggling to administer sweeping policy changes while simultaneously absorbing major reductions in federal support. The pressure on states to reduce their error rates very quickly has forced states to take steps that are making it harder for eligible families to access SNAP — at a time while families continue to struggle with elevated food costs and economic insecurity. SNAP families are facing increased paperwork burdens, staffing shortages, application backlogs, and recertification delays that are making it harder for eligible households to successfully maintain benefits. No state is in a fiscal position to absorb the new costs on top of these existing challenges. That is why the Republican and Democratic governors of all 50 states have come together to [ask Congress to delay implementation of the cost shift](#). The governors note: “These impacts cut across states of all sizes and political affiliations and, if applied based on disrupted data, risk undermining ongoing investments in program integrity and ultimately the viability of the program.”

Children will bear the brunt of these changes, and by losing SNAP they are dealt a double blow: through a process called “direct certification”, children enrolled in SNAP are also automatically eligible for free school meals. Losing this automatic eligibility leads to stigma, bullying, or increased hunger at school – which communities are already experiencing firsthand. Infants and young children who lose SNAP may also lose their access to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

At a time when families are already struggling with the cost of food, Congress should be strengthening pathways to nutrition assistance for children to ensure they have what they need to thrive and reach their full potential. Providing a uniform approach across all states so that each state has the same duration of time to lower their error rates will ensure that SNAP can continue to support our nation's children.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Andrew D. Racine, MD, PhD, FAAP, President
American Academy of Pediatrics

Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, President and CEO
Children's Defense Fund

Bruce Lesley, President
First Focus on Children

Donna Norton, Executive Vice President and a founder
MomsRising Together & MomsRising Education Fund

Janti Soeripto, President and Chief Executive Officer
Save the Children

Matthew Melmed, Executive Director
ZERO TO THREE

Cc: All U.S. Senators