



FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

May 14, 2013

The Honorable Frank Lucas
United States House of Representatives
2311 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
United States House of Representatives
2109 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson:

I am writing on behalf of the First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), regarding the upcoming U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee markup of the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act (FARRM) of 2013. FFCC is a bipartisan organization that advocates directly for legislative change in Congress to ensure that children and families are the priority in federal policy and budget decisions.

We are deeply disappointed in the proposed cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). The SNAP program provides nutritious food to over 20 million children. With one in five American children going to bed at night not knowing whether they or a family member will go hungry the next day, we strongly oppose the \$21 billion in cuts to the nutrition programs. Currently millions of families struggle to make ends meet and cuts to SNAP and SNAP-Ed will only make it harder for families to afford a nutritious diet. The cuts to the SNAP and SNAP –Ed programs will not only make it harder for families to eat healthy on a limited budget, but the SNAP-Ed cut will jeopardize children's access to nutrition education which takes place in schools across the country.

In addition to cuts to the SNAP and SNAP –Ed program, we oppose the proposed changes to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), as the current structure of the program ensures that low-income elementary students have access to a fresh fruit or vegetable snack at school. FFVP helps schools provide a healthy fresh fruit or vegetable snack to over 3 million low income children. With our country facing both high amounts of childhood hunger and childhood obesity, it is important to protect FFVP, which provides a fresh fruit or vegetable snack to children without increasing daily calorie intakes.

First Focus Campaign for Children joined over 90 other national and regional organizations in proposing Farm Bill nutrition priorities based on three guiding principle. A Farm Bill must: protect against hunger; improve nutrition and health outcomes among vulnerable populations; and strengthen community-based initiatives that increase access to healthy food. The proposed legislation does not adequately meet these priorities.

Now more than ever, nutrition programs are a critical resource for vulnerable families and children. These programs are effectively targeted to reach our nation's children and as millions of families struggle to make ends meet, we need to ensure that families have the resources, knowledge, and access to achieve an adequate, nutritious diet for their children. The First Focus Campaign for Children strongly urges Congress to reject cuts to the SNAP and SNAP-Ed programs and asks that Members of Congress work towards protecting and strengthening nutrition programs as the Farm Bill process moves forward.

Sincerely,

Bruce Lesley, President