



April 24, 2012

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
113 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow:

I am writing on behalf of the First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan organization that advocates directly for legislative change in Congress to ensure that children and families are a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, regarding the upcoming Senate Agriculture Committee markup of the 2012 Farm Bill.

We are pleased that the proposed legislation protects the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program as this ensures that low-income elementary students have access to a fresh fruit or vegetable snack, every day at school, as well as the investment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) which helps low-income Americans make healthy choices on a limited budget. In addition, we strongly support investments in The Emergency Food Assistance Program, which help charities better keep up with elevated need for nutrition assistance while our economy continues to recover from the recession.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) 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 proposed more than \$4 billion cut to SNAP. We ask that Congress protect and invest in SNAP, as nearly half of all investments go to children. With millions of families struggling to make ends meet, cuts to SNAP will only make it harder for families to afford a nutritious diet and will increase the demand on charitable feeding operations.

First Focus Campaign for Children joined 93 other national and regional organizations in proposing Farm Bill nutrition priorities based on three guiding principles: 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 adopts several of our recommendations, but it fails to protect nutrition programs from cuts.

Now more than ever, these 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 protect and strengthen nutrition programs as the Farm Bill reauthorization moves forward.

Sincerely,



Bruce Lesley, President