



FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

September 18, 2015

Dear Senator:

On behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), a bipartisan advocacy organization committed to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, I'm writing today regarding the newly released poverty data from the U.S. Census Bureau that once again shows the vital importance of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to America's children.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), first made permanent by President Lyndon B. Johnson through the Food Stamp Act in 1964, has helped to alleviate both poverty and hunger for millions of Americans for over six decades. SNAP provides over 20 million children with essential nutrition benefits that help keep them food secure and on a healthy developmental track. SNAP is one of the most critical government programs to the health and well-being of children, with nearly half of all recipients falling under the age of 18. SNAP helps fight hunger for the 1 in 5 children living in food insecure households in America and remains one of the most effective ways to fight poverty.

The data released by the Census Bureau once again shows an unacceptably high number of American children (21.1% or 15.5 million) living in poverty (\$24,008 yearly income for a family of four) as well as extreme poverty (9.3 % or 6.8 million). Children, especially young children (under age 6), are impacted by poverty and extreme poverty at far greater rates than other age groups. The most recent data shows that while 14.8 percent of the population lives below 100 percent of the poverty threshold and 6.6 percent live below 50 percent the line, those rates jump to 23.5 percent and 10.9 percent for kids under 6.

However, in the effort to provide hunger and nutrition assistance to kids living in low-income families, SNAP has lifted millions out of poverty. In 2014, SNAP lowered child poverty by approximately 2 percent, keeping over 1 million low-income children from falling into poverty. While the child poverty rate remains unacceptably high at 21.1 percent, without SNAP, these numbers would be even more egregious. With that in mind, Congress must stop its attacks of the SNAP program to ensure that over 1 million children remain out of poverty and the 20 million receiving assistance continue to receive the meals they so desperately need.

We look forward to working with you further to expand opportunity and fight both poverty and hunger for every child in this country. If you have any questions please contact Elliott Gluck, Senior Director, External Relations, at ElliottG@firstfocus.org.

Sincerely,

Bruce Lesley

President