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October 2, 2017

Dear Colleague,

In the last decade, the cost of college has increased significantly. For many Americans, this avenue to a brighter future has become unaffordable. In addition to rising tuition costs, recent data confirms that food insecurity and hunger is an important issue on college campuses. A [recent study by the Urban Institute](#) found that "levels of food insecurity among households with students in four-year colleges and vocational education were 11.2 and 13.5 percent, respectively...rates that are largely similar to national levels."

Education is a fundamental facet of the American dream, and food insecurity should not add burdens or barriers to our nation's college students. Aside from few exceptions, college students enrolled half-time or more cannot receive SNAP unless disabled, over the age of 50, receive TANF or similar benefits, or employed at least 20 hours a week. The College Student Hunger Act of 2017 will allow our most vulnerable college students to be eligible for SNAP to receive the additional support they need and deserve.

The College Student Hunger Act of 2017 allows college students enrolled half-time or more to receive SNAP if they meet any one of the following criteria:

- Eligible for the maximum Pell Grant award.
- A student defined as 'independent' in the following areas of the Higher Education Act:
  - Is an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court.
  - An emancipated minor or in legal guardianship as determined by a court.
  - A veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States.
  - Has legal dependents other than a spouse.
  - Is an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth.

**Organizational Endorsements:** FRAC, Share Our Strength, MAZON, Feeding America, Wisconsin HOPE Lab, College and University Food Bank Alliance, Center for Law and Study of Social Policy (CLASP), First Focus Campaign for Children, Florida Impact, National Coalition for the Homeless, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, School House Connection.

**Current Cosponsors:** Dwight Evans, Bonnie Watson Coleman, Frederica Wilson, Jim McGovern, Donald Payne Jr., Jerrold Nadler, Alcee L. Hastings, Gwen Moore, J. Luis Correa, Michelle Lujan Grisham, Joyce Beatty, Tony Cardenas, Vicente Gonzalez, Sandy Levin, and Jamie Raskin.

Please join me in becoming an original cosponsor of the College Student Hunger Act of 2017. If you are interested in cosponsoring, please contact Adam LaRose at [adam.larose@mail.house.gov](mailto:adam.larose@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



Al Lawson  
Member of Congress