

FIRST FOCUS CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN'S FARM BILL PRIORITIES



The Farm Bill offers a cross-cutting opportunity to prioritize children in our nutrition, environmental, and rural assistance programs. Please find below a list of marker bills endorsed by First Focus Campaign for Children. Please note that this list is not all-encompassing and will be updated periodically. For more information, see our policy brief "[What the Farm Bill Means for Kids](#)". For more information, please contact First Focus Campaign for Children's Director of Health, Environmental and Nutrition Policy **Abbie Malloy** at abbie@firstfocus.org.

NUTRITION

Improving Access to Nutrition Act (H.R. 1510)

Introduced by Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), the Improving Access to Nutrition Act eliminates time limits for able-bodied adults without dependents. Children often depend on pooled resources (including SNAP benefits) from extended family members who do not claim them as dependents. This legislation also helps continue SNAP benefits for youth aging out of foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth over the age of 18, who already experience high rates of unemployment and poverty and face barriers to accessing public assistance programs.

LIFT the BAR Act (S.2038/H.R.4170)

Current law requires that lawfully-present immigrant families endure a five-year waiting period before accessing critical benefits, including SNAP. Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) and Sen. Mazie Hirono's (D-HI) LIFT the BAR Act removes this arbitrary barrier and allows thousands of children to access critical public benefits such as SNAP, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and Medicaid without a waiting period.

Hot Foods Act of 2023 (S.2258/H.R.3519)

The Hot Foods Act, introduced by Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY) and Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO), eliminates the prohibition on SNAP recipients purchasing hot and pre-prepared foods. Allowing SNAP recipients to purchase hot foods allows parents who may be working multiple jobs and experiencing "time poverty" or who are housing insecure to put hot and nutritious meals on the table for their children. Eliminating this unnecessary stipulation will help children receive the meals they need regardless of circumstance.

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Closing the Meal Gap Act of 2023 (S.1336/H.R.3037)

Introduced by Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC) and Sen. Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY), the Closing the Meal Gap Act aims to expand SNAP benefits by increasing eligibility and eliminating arduous time limits, increasing SNAP allotments, and expanding access. The legislation allows families in Puerto Rico to access the same benefits as families in the continental United States, replaces the Thrifty Food Plan with the Low-Cost Food Plan as the basis of SNAP allotments (increasing benefits by 30%), and eliminates bureaucratic time limits that unduly create barriers to enrollment.

Opt for Health with SNAP, Close the Fruit and Vegetable Gap (OH SNAP) Act (S. 2015/H.R. 4149)

The OH SNAP, Close the Fruit and Vegetable Gap Act, introduced by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE), would expand the Farm Bill's GusNIP program. GusNIP offers competitive grants to nonprofit organizations and local governments for projects that incentivize SNAP participants to purchase fruits and vegetables. This legislation would increase both mandatory and discretionary funding to allow more retailers to participate in the point-of-sale fruit and vegetable incentives offered by the program.

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Nutrition Act of 2023 (S.1639)

Sen. Marco Rubio's (R-FL) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Nutrition Act of 2023 builds on the success of the United States Department of Agriculture's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). The FFVP assists elementary schools in purchasing fresh produce for their students and prioritizes schools with high enrollment in free and reduced-price meal programs. This legislation also expands the program to include middle and high schools, ensuring that children of all ages can consume the produce they need to thrive.

SNAP Access for Medically Vulnerable Children Act (H.R.706)

The SNAP Access for Medically Vulnerable Children Act, introduced by Rep. Shontel Brown (D-OH), updates the SNAP Excess Medical Expense Deduction to include children with one or more chronic conditions. Any medical expenses above \$35 could be deducted from a family's net income. This means that a family's SNAP allotment adequately takes into account their medical costs and reflects that their income may be reduced due to medical needs. This means that households no longer have to choose between paying for medical expenses or putting food on their children's plates.

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RESTORE Act of 2023 (S.1753/H.R. 3479)

Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN)'s RESTORE Act lifts the lifetime SNAP ban on individuals with drug felonies. The lifetime ban pushes more parents toward recidivism and unduly strips food assistance from their children. Removing these barriers to reentry sets up formerly incarcerated people, and their children, for success and corrects some of the injustices brought on by the discriminatory "war on drugs."

Enhance Access to SNAP (EATS) Act of 2023 (S.1488/H.R.3138)

The EATS Act of 2023, introduced by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), permanently expands access to SNAP for students enrolled in college at least half-time. The bill eliminates work-for-food programs and allows students to qualify for SNAP if they are eligible for work-study programs or have an expected family contribution of \$0. The EATS Act could help as many of 4 million students access SNAP benefits.

Puerto Rico Nutrition Assistance Fairness Act of 2023 (S.949/H.R.253)

The Puerto Rico Nutrition Assistance Fairness Act, championed by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Rep. Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR), transitions Puerto Rico away from its current block grant funding structure for SNAP and allows the commonwealth's people to fully participate in the program. Puerto Rico's child poverty rate sits at 57%, and this legislation ensures that those children have equal access to the nutrition assistance they need.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

Headwaters Protection Act of 2023 (S. 1853/H.R. 4018)

The Headwaters Protection Act, introduced by Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA), expands the U.S. Forest Service's ability to protect U.S. watersheds within the nation's forests — the country's largest source of water — from pollutants at the source. Children's physiology means that they drink more water in relation to their body weight than adults, making them more susceptible to dangerous contaminants. This legislation expands programs that invest in pollution prevention projects and increases funding for pollution monitoring.

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Opportunities in Organic Act (S. 1582/H.R. 3650)

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) and Sen. Peter Welch's (D-VT) Opportunities in Organic Act invests in tools to make organic farming more accessible, especially for traditionally disenfranchised and small farmers. Pesticides are particularly dangerous for children, who may suffer lifelong developmental and health complications from exposure. Reducing the use of these pesticides through organic farming will help protect our children.

Climate Agricultural Conservation Practices Act (H.R. 708)

Rep. Julia Brownley's (D-CA) Climate Agricultural Conservation Practices Act helps farmers make the transition to resilient, climate-friendly practices. The agriculture sector accounts for 10% of America's greenhouse gas emissions, making it a major contributor to the climate crisis. This legislation helps farmers access the tools and funding they need to adjust their practices and reduce their carbon pollution.

Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticides Act (S. 269)

Sen. Cory Booker's (D-NJ) Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticides Act bans the use of certain pesticides and cancels the registration of pesticides that have been banned in the European Union (EU). These pesticides are linked to neurodevelopmental issues, hormonal dysregulation, and a host of other complications specifically impacting children's health.

Agriculture Resilience Act of 2023 (S. 1016/H.R. 1840)

The Agriculture Resilience Act, introduced by Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME) and Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM), gives farmers the tools they need to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040 — making major strides toward keeping the agricultural sector on-track with President Biden's climate goals. This comprehensive bill will both combat the climate crisis and make our land, environment, and food more resilient to climate-related disasters.

Relief for Farmers Hit with PFAS Act (S. 747/H.R. 1517)

The bipartisan Relief for Farmers Hit with PFAS Act, introduced by Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME) and Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), helps farmers keep "forever chemicals," or PFAS, out of the food system. Foods contaminated by PFAS pose a unique risk to children, who may experience lifelong health and development impacts upon exposure. The bill provides monitoring and remediation assistance to keep PFAS out of our food.

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CHILD CARE

Expanding Child Care in Rural America Act of 2023 (S. 1867/H.R. 3922)

The Expanding Child Care in Rural America Act of 2023, introduced by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA) would direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to prioritize projects that address the supply, quality, and cost of child care in rural communities in several USDA grant programs.

CHILD LABOR

Child Labor Exploitation Accountability Act of 2023 (S. 1288/H.R. 2822)

Rep. Greg Casar (D-TX) and Sen. Cory Booker's (D-NJ) Child Labor Exploitation Accountability Act bars the USDA from working with companies with persistent child labor violations. The agriculture sector is responsible for more than half of all child work-related fatalities. This bill prevents the government from engaging with corporations who contribute to this tragedy.