



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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Senator Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Rand Paul
295 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative James Comer
2410 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Brett Guthrie
2161 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Morgan McGarvey
1527 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Thomas Massie
2371 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Hal Rogers
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Andy Barr
2430 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Members of Kentucky's Congressional Delegation:

I write to you with deep concern regarding the U.S. House's reconciliation bill, H.R. 1, and the effects it is expected to have on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). More than 600,000 Kentuckians rely on this vital support. I urge you to consider the impact this legislation may have on Kentucky's most vulnerable citizens.

The proposed changes to SNAP will significantly limit the number of Kentuckians that receive its benefits and will reduce the amount of those benefits, particularly for households with children, seniors, individuals with medical conditions, disabilities, and those recovering from disasters. Reducing or removing SNAP benefits will increase hunger as these Kentucky families struggle to meet their basic nutritional needs.

I am particularly concerned about the following potential impacts:

SNAP is Crucial for Kentuckians

Approximately 600,000 people in Kentucky rely on SNAP every month, which is about one in every eight Kentuckians. SNAP is a lifeline to these individuals as they work to secure better jobs. The bill will reduce the number of Kentuckians that receive SNAP benefits by expanding requirements, increasing paperwork, and shifting costs to Kentucky state government. These

proposals could affect thousands of low-income Kentuckians through reduced benefits or complete loss of eligibility.

SNAP Work Requirements Will Hurt Kentucky Children and Seniors

The proposed bill introduces significant changes to work requirements for SNAP participants to remain eligible. Stay-at-home parents with children ages seven and above would be required to meet the work requirements. Only parents with children under age seven would be exempt from work requirements, a significant change from the current exemption for children under age 18. The bill increases the age at which participants must continue working from 54 to 64. Many recipients are already employed in low-wage jobs, providing care for family members, or managing serious health conditions. Imposing stringent requirements and bureaucratic hurdles, such as monthly reporting, risks widespread disenrollment—not because individuals are unwilling to comply, but due to imposing additional red tape on our families.

Shifts Significant Costs to Kentucky State Government

For the first time since the inception of the program in 1939, the proposed bill shifts up to 25% of SNAP benefit costs to state governments. For Kentucky, that would mean approximately \$64 to \$317 million in new costs that must be paid from Kentucky's state budget to maintain SNAP. SNAP was established to be a safety net program that scales up during recessions and scales down during better economic times. Like most state governments, Kentucky has reduced revenues when SNAP enrollments rise. Shifting more costs to state governments will likely cause cuts to SNAP benefits when they are needed most. With the bill's escalating state share of SNAP benefit costs based on error rates, Kentucky may face a one-year increase of over \$250 million with almost no time to make that large of a budget adjustment.

Another way the bill will shift SNAP costs to state governments is changing the cost sharing of SNAP administration from a 50%/50% equal share to states covering 75%, effective October 2025. This change will result in an additional \$66 million in annual costs to Kentucky's state budget—months before the Kentucky legislature will have the opportunity to act and amend the enacted budget. This will place significant strain on Kentucky's state budget, forcing difficult decisions that could impact the SNAP program and delivery of other critical services and programs.

Consequences for Kentucky's School Food Assistance

Kentucky K-12 students whose families are categorically eligible under SNAP or Medicaid are automatically certified eligible for free breakfast and lunch. They don't have to fill out a separate household application. With the proposed new work requirement change for parents with dependents, the number of SNAP-eligible families will decline. That change will increase the paperwork burden on those families to maintain school food assistance eligibility. Also, more than 1,100 Kentucky schools and more than 500,000 Kentucky students participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program, with many schools receiving free breakfast and lunch for all students. As the number of SNAP-eligible families declines, the schools claiming percentages would decline, creating a financial disincentive to participate in the CEP program.

Reducing the number of Kentuckians who receive SNAP benefits may result in limiting the program's positive impacts, including:

SNAP Participation Reduces Abuse and Neglect

SNAP helps alleviate hunger, which has been linked with increased rates of childhood abuse and neglect, and increased involvement in child welfare services. SNAP participation decreases family stress related to poverty.

SNAP is Good for Grocers

Reducing or eliminating SNAP will have a significant impact on Kentucky's economy, particularly affecting the 4,625 grocers across the state who accept SNAP. These retailers, along with their employees and suppliers, rely on the steady stream of SNAP benefits to maintain their operations.

SNAP is Good for Local Farmers

Furthermore, 137 farmers' markets in Kentucky accept SNAP, directly supporting local farmers and promoting access to fresh, nutritious food. Ensuring the continuation of SNAP bolsters local economies and sustains farmers and family farms throughout Kentucky. Reduction in SNAP benefits would lead to decreased sales, adversely affecting farmers' markets and access to fresh, healthy foods for entire communities.

SNAP Improves Health Outcomes

The proposed bill would eliminate the National Education and Obesity Prevention Grant. Commonly known as SNAP Education (SNAP-ED), this program plays a crucial role in promoting health and nutrition among SNAP recipients by providing essential nutrition education and cooking classes to thousands of Kentuckians, empowering them to select and prepare healthy, nutritious foods, make informed nutrition choices, and effectively manage their food budgets. This program improves health outcomes and reduces the impact of diet-sensitive chronic diseases, such as hypertension and type II diabetes.

I respectfully urge you to oppose any provision in H.R. 1 that would undermine SNAP benefits, funding, or accessibility in our state.

Please stand with the people of Kentucky and support a nutrition assistance program that delivers essential, comprehensive, and equitable support—especially for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and continued service to the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,



Andy Beshear
Governor

cc: Members of the Kentucky General Assembly