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April 21, 2021

Mr. Bill Foster
1224 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bill Foster:

I hope that you are doing well. My name is Rifqa Dacloush, and I am a current Nutrition and Dietetics student at Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois, and a future Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. I am writing this letter to discuss my opposition to H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 due to the numerous changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Millions in the United States suffer from food insecurity. Many negative effects across the life cycle are associated with it. These include inferior academic achievement, insufficient intake of key nutrients, elevated risk for chronic disease, and poor emotional and mental health. SNAP is the country's most helpful anti-hunger program. It provides food aid to one in eight Americans. Most SNAP beneficiaries are children, seniors, or individuals with a disability. The 2018 House farm bill would reduce the effectiveness of the SNAP program and increase the hardship for many families and individuals.

I oppose any destructive proposal that intends to alter the bases of the SNAP benefits or attempts to lessen its funding. Furthermore, I oppose changing the structure of SNAP from a federally funded to a state-funded program since this would cap the aid and limit the responsiveness of the program to adapt to changes in economic conditions.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the following is the impact of the House farm bill on SNAP and on public health:

- On average, 1.2 million people per month would no longer get food assistance due to changes regarding SNAP work requirements.
- On average, 256,000 children per year will not have access to free school meals due to changes to categorial eligibility. They will only receive reduced-price or paid meals, while their families concurrently lose SNAP eligibility.
- On average, 560,00 households would get a SNAP benefits reduction averaging \$84 per month due to changes in standard utility changes.

I call on your support to tone down the time limits on SNAP benefits and to assess the drastic effects of work requirements on food insecurity. Moreover, I call on your support to oppose SNAP fund reductions as a mean to provide unemployed adults in our district with worthwhile employment and training opportunities.

In my opinion, the following are key recommendations to strengthen and have the SNAP program operate in an efficacious manner:

- Increase the program benefits to stop hunger and provide families with healthy food options.
- Increase the availability of healthy food options by revising the standards for SNAP retailers.
- Guarantee that laws lead to improved retail options that boost and sell healthy foods.
- Remove the inclusion of the requirement of basic allowance for housing for military members in their SNAP benefits income calculations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please, feel free to contact me for any follow-up or clarification.

Sincerely,

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