



May 16, 2013

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**Connecticut Food Bank Opposes Cuts to Hunger Relief in House Farm Bill
*Urges state congressional delegation to restore cuts on house floor***

EAST HAVEN, CT - Connecticut Food Bank is outraged by the House Agriculture Committee's vote to slash spending on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) by \$21 billion.

"These cuts to SNAP will take food from the refrigerators and kitchen tables of vulnerable low-income families struggling to get back on their feet in the wake of the recession, said Nancy L. Carrington, President & CEO, Connecticut Food Bank. "On behalf of Connecticut Food Bank and our network of food assistance agencies, I urge our Connecticut congressional delegation to oppose cuts to SNAP in the House Farm Bill and to work to restore the cuts on the House floor."

Under the proposed cuts, two million people nationally will lose benefits entirely, 210,000 children will lose access to free school meals and another 850,000 households will see their benefits cut by an average of \$90 per month. More than 400,000 people in Connecticut rely on SNAP to help feed themselves and their families.

Carrington said the cuts come on top of across-the-board cuts for all SNAP beneficiaries beginning in November that will lower benefits by about \$25 for a family of three. "That may not seem like much to you or me, but for a family scraping by, it matters a lot. Pulling the rug out from under low-income families by cutting SNAP at a time when the need for food assistance has never been greater is unfair and short-sighted.

"Local charities are already stretched to the breaking point with trying to keep up with increased need as families in Connecticut continue to feel the impact of the recession. Every day Connecticut Food Bank sees the generous support of our volunteers and donors. But charity alone cannot meet the need. We also need a strong federal commitment to SNAP and other hunger relief programs."

Connecticut Food Bank serves approximately 300,000 people each year through a network of more than 650 food pantries, soup kitchens and other food assistance agencies.

Those served by the food assistance network include households who earn too much to qualify for assistance or those who have too much in assets for SNAP but who still struggle to feed their families. In addition, there are SNAP participants whose benefits are inadequate to get them through the month. SNAP benefits average less than \$1.50 per person per meal and more than 90 percent of benefits are spent by day 21 of the month, leaving many families to turn to local charities to make ends meet. SNAP is targeted at our most vulnerable: 76 percent of SNAP households include a child, elderly person, or disabled person, and 91 percent of benefits go to households with gross income at or below 100 percent of the poverty line.

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Connecticut Food Bank serves more than 650 local emergency food assistance programs in six of Connecticut's eight counties: Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London and Windham. Connecticut Food Bank distributes an average of 34 tons of food every business day.