



September 18, 2013

OPPOSE DRACONIAN CUTS TO FOOD STAMPS

Dear Representative:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, we write to express our strong opposition to H.R. 3102, the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013. H.R. 3102 would cut \$40 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) and deny assistance to nearly three million of the most vulnerable Americans among us. If the House leadership insists on bringing this draconian measure to the floor for consideration, we intend to record your position in our voting records for the 113th Congress.

H.R. 3102 would make several drastic changes to the SNAP program under the false pretense of encouraging recipients to work. First, by eliminating a provision that since 1996 has allowed states to continue providing relief beyond the three-month cutoff, it would eliminate relief for low-income, unemployed, childless adults who live in areas of high unemployment. CBO estimates that this provision would terminate benefits to 1.7 million jobless individuals in 2014. Second, the bill includes another provision that would cut off another 2.1 million people in 2014, mostly low-income working families and low-income seniors, who have gross incomes or assets that are modestly above the federal SNAP limits, but who have disposable incomes (the income that a family has available for food and other needs) below the poverty line, as well as low-income, unemployed parents and their children (other than parents of infants) who want to work but who cannot find a job or an opening in a training program. Moreover, H.R. 3102 includes another provision known as the “Southerland provision,” which would give states a strong financial incentive to cut off SNAP relief, by letting them keep half of any federal savings, which they can use for any purpose they see fit. It makes these changes while doing nothing to provide jobs, work or workfare programs, or additional funds for work or training slots.

These cuts to the SNAP program would have a devastating impact on the communities we represent, including young children, students, older people, the jobless, the hungry, and the uninsured. While we agree that it is vital to address our nation’s long-term debt, there is something fundamentally inhumane about a plan that would impose new “savings” entirely on the backs of the people who can least afford them.

Congress must face the fact that sensible, targeted revenue increases are absolutely necessary and a responsible component of ensuring our long-term fiscal health. In the meantime, we urge you to reject H.R. 3102. It is an embarrassment that such a bill may come to the floor.

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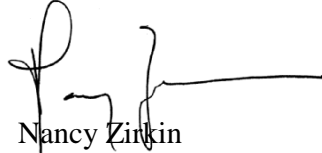


If you have any questions, please contact either of us, or Senior Counsel Rob Randhava, at (202) 466-3311.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President