



ASSESSMENT OF S.3042 THE AGRICULTURE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2018

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice believes that in our wealthy nation, ending hunger is not only possible but is a moral imperative. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps lift people out of poverty, reduces the number of people who lack access to nutritious food, and has lasting effects on people's lives. However, as the government prioritizes tax cuts for corporations over funding human needs programs, SNAP is vulnerable to funding cuts and negative structural and programmatic changes that create barriers to accessing needed nutrition assistance.

Given the principles of our faith and the proven benefits of SNAP to lift people out of poverty, provide food security, and serve as economic stimuli, **NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice calls on Congress to support the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and its structure.**

Here is an assessment of the Senate proposal, S.3042, compared to NETWORK's SNAP Principles:

S.3042 Passes Principle 1: Protect and maintain the basic program design of SNAP.

SNAP is effective, efficient, and helps put food on the tables of 42 million people. Any changes or alleged cost savings approaches to SNAP should not affect the program's flexibility and effectiveness in supplementing recipients' purchasing power for basic nutrition.

- S.3042 makes minimal changes to SNAP, essentially authorizing the program to carry forward as-is with a few adjustments to improve effectiveness in addressing hunger.
- S.3042 provides for review of and improvements to the functionality of the electronic benefit transfer systems that states use to issue benefits.

S.3042 Passes Principle 2: Do not cap or limit SNAP funding.

Caps on funding or other limitations would restrict access to food for those who need it. SNAP benefits should take into account variables like family size and the real cost of food to ensure adequate resources.

- S.3042 does not propose any cuts in funding or additional restrictions which would arbitrarily impact SNAP participants' benefits.
- S.3042 increases and makes mandatory funding for State agencies to partner with emergency feeding organizations to utilize food donated by agricultural producers, processors, or distributors.
- S.3042 reinvests any program savings anticipated from integrity and efficiency measures back into the nutrition assistance program.

S.3042 Passes Principle 3: Prioritize access to fresh produce and choice.

SNAP should uphold human dignity, which includes choice and does not stigmatize recipients. The program should encourage and increase recipients' access to fresh produce and healthy foods over packaged and processed foods.

- S.3042 allows retail food stores to offer incentives to households participating in SNAP to purchase certain foods recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- S. 3042 makes Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grants permanent, which support projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among SNAP participants.
- S.3042 expands the authority of farmers markets to operate as SNAP retailers.

S.3042 Passes Principle 4: Reject new mandatory work requirements.

Any additional employment-related provisions applied to the SNAP program should focus on providing workforce development and job training opportunities, rather than simply tying eligibility for SNAP benefits to employment. SNAP already has work requirements, which allow for state flexibility with local labor market conditions. S.3042 builds on existing Employment and Training initiatives to develop credible programs that respond to local economic realities.

- S.3024 allows for additional training and work opportunities via workforce partnerships with private employers and non-profits and would allow SNAP recipients to participate in these opportunities to meet existing mandatory employment and training requirements.
- S.3024 enables more states to participate and provides funding for several pilot programs designed to determine the most effective ways of assisting unemployed or underemployed SNAP participants to secure and retain jobs and advance in the labor market.
- S.3024 establishes a referral or reassessment process for participants who are subject to an employment and training requirement, if they are determined to be ill-suited.
- S.3024 provides additional funding for employment and training pilot projects targeting individuals who are 50 years of age or older, formerly incarcerated, or in substance abuse treatment programs.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: S.3042 passes our faith principles and preserves the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice calls on Congress to support this bipartisan proposal that will benefit the common good.