

December 21, 2022

Our organizations are dedicated to fighting food insecurity across the nation. We write with deep appreciation by leaders in Congress to secure badly needed investments in programs that prevent hunger including in both Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Child Nutrition programs. Both are critical as food prices continue to soar and low-income families struggle with skyrocketing heating, transportation and housing costs. We are grateful that the Omnibus Appropriations package includes language to address EBT card security and the illegal stealing (skimming) of SNAP benefits, and we appreciate the creation of a Summer EBT program for low-income children who rely on meals through the National School Lunch Program during the school year. **But we cannot support funding Summer EBT by cutting SNAP benefits nor cutting any other funding sources that are dedicated to existing anti-poverty programs.** Our disappointment is based on our local perspectives on the harm this policy shift will mean.

The pandemic proved unequivocally that hunger and poverty are a policy choice, and that government can solve these crises when it acts. Child poverty fell to a record low of 5.2% in 2021 with the boost in SNAP benefits and nationwide school meals for all children. The SNAP Emergency Allotments, an average of \$82 per month per person, have been critical as Covid persists and living costs continue to outpace family income. While we clearly hope that both the adverse health and economic impacts of Covid will subside in the years ahead, now is not the time to be sunseting these critical SNAP allotments.

All of the organizations listed below have long supported and advocated for the creation of a permanent, nation-wide Summer EBT program that would provide a grocery card to children in low-income families during the summer, the hungriest months for children. Summer EBT has been shown as one of the most effective interventions to fight child hunger. We cannot support

funding Child Nutrition Programs by cutting SNAP benefits, including prematurely ending the Emergency Allotments in February of 2023. This is consistent with our prior opposition against the 2010 Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act that funded improved school meal nutrition standards by prematurely sunseting the SNAP boost from the American Rescue and Recovery Act (ARRA). The reduction of SNAP benefits in 2013 triggered a major hunger cliff, which contributed to the decade long period of elevated hunger and poverty. Taking money from one nutrition program that benefits low-income children and families to pay for another does little to alleviate the struggle with hunger these families are experiencing.

Sincerely,

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Norwescap

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Mercer Street Friends

D.C. Hunger Solutions

GRACE/End Child Poverty California

Hunger Solutions New York

Virginia Hunger Solutions

Florida Impact

South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice
Center

Shriver Center on Poverty Law

Hunger Solutions Minnesota

Hunger Free Vermont

Hunger Free New Jersey

Fulfill New Jersey

Community FoodBank of New Jersey

Food Bank of South Jersey