



May 13, 2025

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Bread.org

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20515

Re: Hearing on SNAP Integrity and Farm Security / Budget Reconciliation

Chairman G.T. Thompson, Ranking Member Angie Craig, and Members of the Committee,

Members of the Committee, I am Reverend Eugene Cho, President and CEO of Bread for the World. I want to start by thanking you both, Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Craig, for your years of support for critical food assistance programs. You both, alongside the United States Department of Agriculture, have been champions in addressing hunger, and we are so grateful for your support for this work. We look forward to continuing to work with you both in strengthening bipartisan support for food assistance, especially the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which has helped make sure that millions of American children and their families do not go to bed hungry.

The organization I lead, **Bread for the World**, is a Christian advocacy organization urging U.S. decision-makers to do all they can to pursue a world without hunger. For five decades, Bread has advocated for government policies and programs that will end hunger in the United States and around the world. **On behalf of our 300,000-strong network of advocates, churches, and partners in every congressional district**, Bread is committed to empowering and supporting the rights of people who are affected by poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition, and marginalization in the U.S. and globally.

I know that nutrition programs in America work and are effective in supporting families around the country. In 2001, my wife and I founded a multicultural, and multigenerational church community in Seattle. In my first year I did not have a salary from the church, but from working as a janitor at Barnes & Noble. It was an arduous and unexpected beginning but deeply formational. My young family benefitted from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or WIC, the U.S. Government's health and nutrition program for pregnant and postpartum women and infants during those early years. Just like WIC, SNAP is a lifeline for families who are struggling to make ends meet and working to achieve their version of the American Dream.

Right now, more than **47 million Americans do not have sufficient access to food or nutrition or are food insecure**. Bread is extremely concerned about the proposed cuts and policy changes to SNAP. If these proposals are adopted, millions of children and families in low-income households would lose the critical assistance provided to them through SNAP. As our nation's most effective anti-hunger policy, any reduction in SNAP benefits will increase hunger and food insecurity for millions of Americans.

As you come together to determine pathways forward in this budget reconciliation process, we urge you to continue to fund critical anti-hunger, child nutrition, and poverty-focused programs like SNAP, and oppose changes to the program that would increase hunger in this country.

SNAP enables 42 million Americans to put food on the table, while making up less than 2 percent of the federal budget. Nutrition assistance programs like SNAP are the first lines of defense against persistent and chronic hunger in America. SNAP is a very targeted program, reaching those who need it most – 75 percent of participants live below the poverty line and receive 90 percent of total benefits. SNAP is also incredibly effective at reaching the most vulnerable populations with nearly 60 percent of participants being children or seniors.

With elevated prices of food at the grocery store, American families are feeling financial pressure at home and worry about where they will get their next meal. The average SNAP benefit of \$6 per person per day is a key investment in promoting healthy child development, supporting vulnerable families, and strengthening communities in rural and urban America. Our nation's nutrition assistance programs work and should continue to always be robust and responsive to the needs of American children and families, especially during disasters and economic downturns. We urge you to protect SNAP and the participants enrolled in this program.

Specifically, we at Bread urge Congress to oppose the following policy proposals being discussed in the reconciliation process:

- **Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) Freezes or Rollbacks:** The updates to the TFP in 2021 resulted in an additional \$1.40 in average daily benefits for SNAP participants. Estimates suggest that this modest increase lifted 2.4 million people out of poverty, including more than 1 million children. Any revisions to the TFP that would freeze future updates or reverse the modifications made in 2021 would push millions of children and their families below the poverty line and expose them to hunger.
- **Increased Work Requirements:** Bread knows the value and dignity of work – and SNAP rules already recognize that by implementing work requirements for those participants who are able. Expanding work requirements would limit access to the program for those who need it most, while offering little to no measurable improvement in employment outcomes. Millions of SNAP participants struggle to find work because of local economic conditions or barriers to steady employment. Imposing additional work requirements would not address broader issues of barriers to employment but instead result in more American children and their families experiencing hunger without improving labor market conditions.
- **Shifting to Cost-Sharing Structure:** The vast majority of state budgets would not be able to absorb a cost-sharing percentage of SNAP benefits. Some of the hungriest states with higher-than-average SNAP utilization rates like New Mexico, Louisiana, West Virginia, and Oklahoma already face tight budgetary constraints and are unlikely to be able to afford any significant SNAP benefit costs. This reality would result in a reduction of available benefits for already struggling families. The consequence of cost-sharing would be a reduction in available benefits or a sharp decline in participating households. Either outcome would result in an increase of food insecurity and poverty across the nation while forcing states to absorb a cost they are unable to afford.

We thank you for your service to the American people and commitment to ensuring that Americans are safe, healthy, and prosperous. This shared vision of a flourishing America is only attainable when children and families across this country are assured that the U.S. government supports their nutritional needs when they need it most. Our country has significantly lowered the number of

Americans experiencing food insecurity over the last several decades, and access to SNAP was crucial in achieving this.

At Bread, we believe God's love in Jesus Christ compels us to love our neighbors – in action as well as expression. Every person is made in God's image and carries a sacred dignity and immeasurable worth, as laid out so clearly in Genesis 1:27. Whatever your personal and faith motivations, I encourage you to act courageously in support of the most vulnerable among us. I hope that you continue to invest in programs that ensure people across the U.S. can feed themselves and their families, and to expand your legacy of promoting human flourishing. Bread is committed to ending hunger for all people and urges Congress to renew its commitment to ending poverty and protecting nutrition assistance, especially in its current form.

Thank you and may God continue to bless your work.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene Cho". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rev. Eugene Cho  
President & CEO