

2018 Farm Bill Fact Sheet

Work Requirements

House Farm Bill Will Take Food Off The Table, Won't Lead to Better Jobs

The House Farm Bill (HR 2) proposes to expand counterproductive and punitive "work requirements" for CalFresh recipients. For people age 18 to 59, including parents with children over age 6, the bill would cut off food assistance if they can't prove every month that they are working an average of 20 hours per week. If a person can't prove they meet these requirements, they are banned from SNAP/CalFresh for one year, and for three years the second time.

Strict Requirements Are Unworkable for Many Low-Wage Workers

Most SNAP participants who can work, do work,¹ but many low-wage part-time workers have no control over their work schedules.² Consider a single mother with two children working as a restaurant server earning minimum wage and scheduled to work 25 hours per week. The restaurant is having a slow day, so she is released without advance notice, cutting her work week down to 18 hours. She loses her CalFresh assistance and is banned from assistance for one year, even though she is doing everything she can to work. Cutting off vital food assistance for struggling households does not support gainful employment.



Proposed Employment and Training Programs Are Underfunded and Untested

HR 2 proposes to expand SNAP Employment & Training programs to help households meet the new work requirements. However, the programs are woefully underfunded, only providing about \$30 per training slot per month³ – not nearly enough to provide meaningful training or support services such as child care or transportation. The 2014 Farm Bill authorized 10 pilot projects to test new and innovative approaches to connect SNAP recipients with job training and placement, including one in Fresno, CA. The results of these pilots will not be available until 2021, which means that these programs have little track record of success. We still don't really know what works.

What should Congress do?

Oppose the House Farm Bill that would put food assistance at risk for nearly 1.2 million Californians, most in families with children, by subjecting them to "work requirements" that are underfunded, untested, and unworkable. Rather than cutting SNAP/CalFresh, Congress should work to increase wages and provide important work supports such as child care and transportation—the right ways to provide a higher standard of living for struggling Californians.

¹"Making SNAP Work Requirements Harsher Will Not Improve Outcomes for Low-Income People," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Available at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/making-snap-work-requirements-harsher-will-not-improve-outcomes-for-low-income-families>

²"Hour Crisis – Unstable Work Hours in the Los Angeles Retail Sector," UCLA Labor Center and Los Angeles Area Alliance for a New Economy. Available at <http://laane.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Hour-Crisis-Unstable-Schedules-in-the-Los-Angeles-Retail-Sector.pdf>

³"House Agriculture Committee's Farm Bill Would Increase Food Insecurity and Hardship," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities,. Available at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/house-agriculture-committee-s-farm-bill-would-increase-food-insecurity-and-hardship>