

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

August 30, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
Chairman  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
329-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Ranking Member  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
329-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael K. Conaway  
Chairman  
House Agriculture Committee  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member  
House Agriculture Committee  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Roberts and Conaway and Ranking Members Stabenow and Peterson:

As you begin negotiations to finalize the 2018 Farm Bill, we strongly urge you to reject any changes to eligibility or work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

SNAP, formerly known as the food stamp program, is our nation's foremost and most effective anti-hunger program. Currently, over 42 million people in more than 20 million households rely on the program to be able to afford a sufficient diet. SNAP recipients are our nation's most vulnerable – nearly 20 million are children, almost 5 million are low-income seniors, and 1.5 million are military veterans.

As you know, H.R. 2, the *Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018*, includes harmful structural changes to the program which will undoubtedly restrict access to nutrition assistance. The bill proposes cutting more than \$23 billion from SNAP benefits in order to mandate untested, bureaucratic job training programs that will force participants into packed classrooms which research suggests will do little to increase employment. All told, this proposal provides only \$30 per participant per month for these training programs – a stunningly inadequate amount.

Moreover, H.R. 2 expands SNAP's mandatory work requirements and creates harsh penalties for those unable to meet them. If a SNAP recipient fails to meet the bill's harsh work requirements, they would lose their benefits for an entire year. This penalty increases to three years for subsequent occurrences.

The misconception that stricter work requirements are the answer to poverty and unemployment rests on the flawed belief that disadvantaged people will only work if the government forces them to. In reality, there are complex economic barriers that prevent people from working, even


though they want to. These barriers have been shown to include a lack of adequate skills or work experience that employers seek, unaffordable child care services, social disadvantages that make identifying and applying for jobs difficult, or other unmet personal needs that make employment unattainable. Mandating work requirements does not solve these issues, and in many cases only exacerbates them.

The House bill's approach to SNAP is a solution in search of a problem that does not exist. SNAP already has stringent work requirements, and, in reality, those on SNAP who are able to work currently do. Time and again, SNAP has been shown to successfully reduce poverty and alleviate hunger.


Along with providing millions of people with nutrition assistance, the Farm Bill serves as a vital safety net for American farmers and ranchers. With many sectors of the agricultural economy experiencing sustained low prices, this year's farm income could be the lowest in more than a decade. An on-time Farm Bill reauthorization would provide welcomed certainty for the agricultural industry. However, any inclusion of SNAP-related work requirements would most certainly jeopardize such a reauthorization.

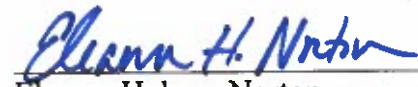
We again urge you to oppose harmful changes to SNAP, and to ensure that this vital nutrition assistance remains accessible for all who need it.


Sincerely,

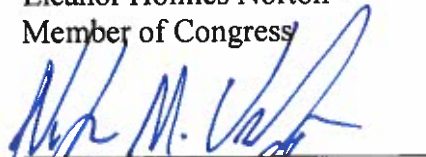
  
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Member of Congress

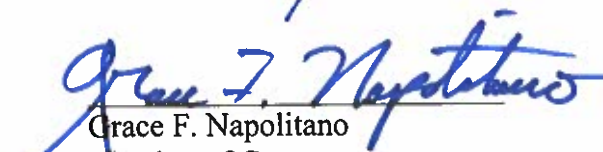
  
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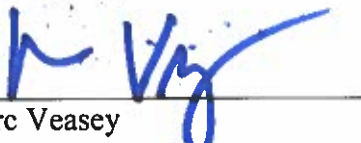
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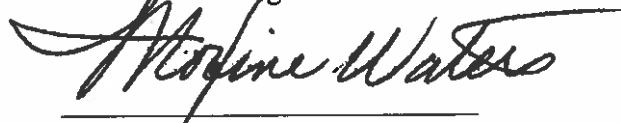
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Albio Sires  
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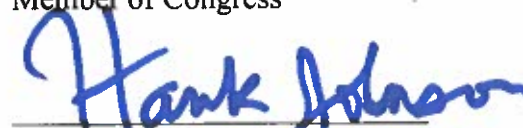
Maxine Waters  
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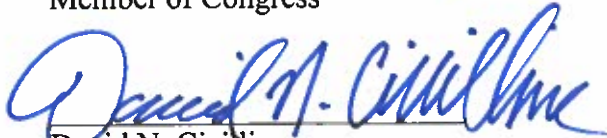
Barbara Lee  
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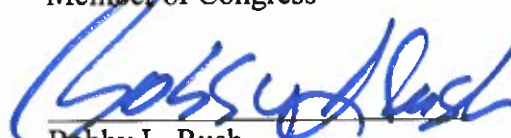
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David N. Cicilline  
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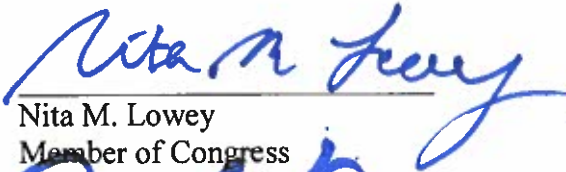
Steve Cohen  
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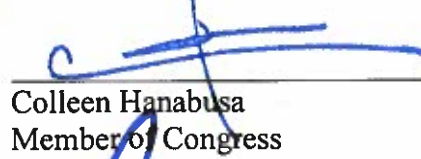
Tim Ryan  
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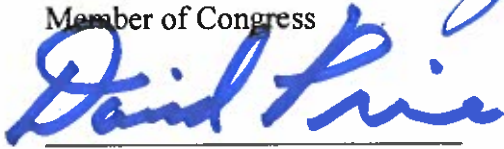
John Lewis  
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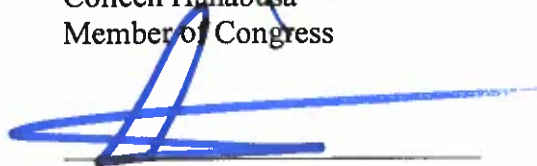
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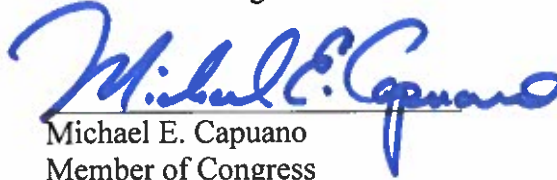
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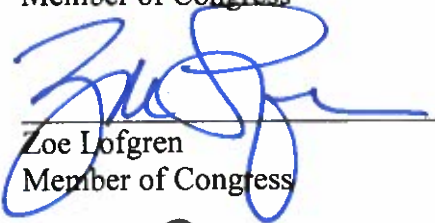
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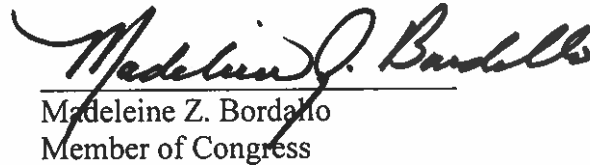
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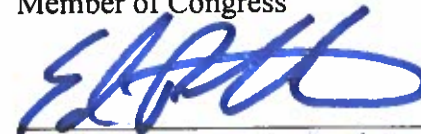
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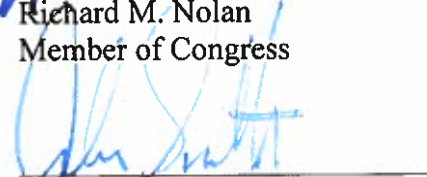
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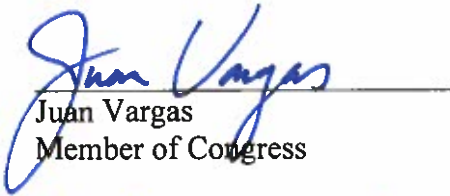




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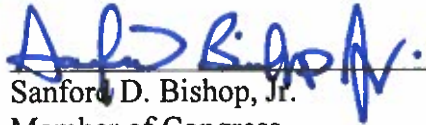
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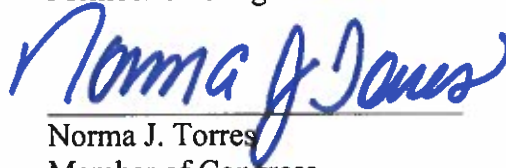
Juan Vargas  
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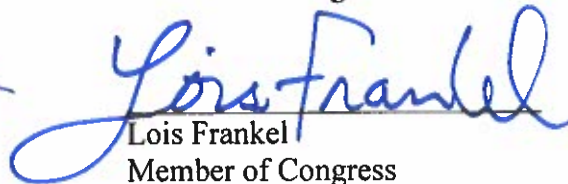
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Gregory Meeks  
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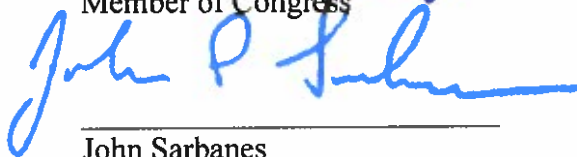
Lois Frankel  
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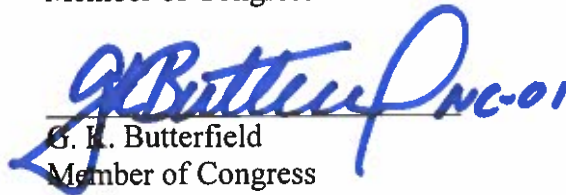
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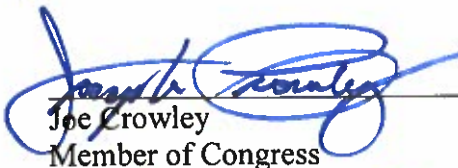
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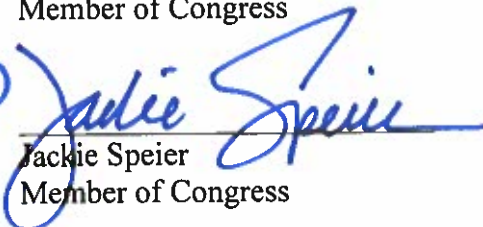
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*Lloyd Doggett*

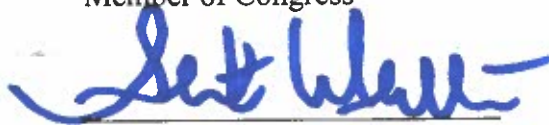
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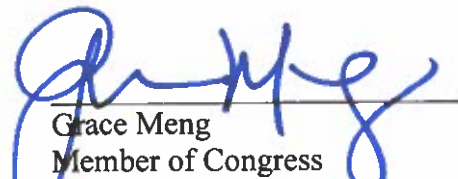
  
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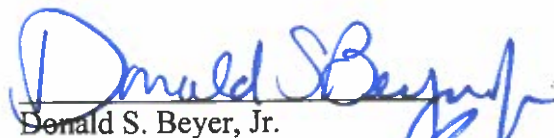
  
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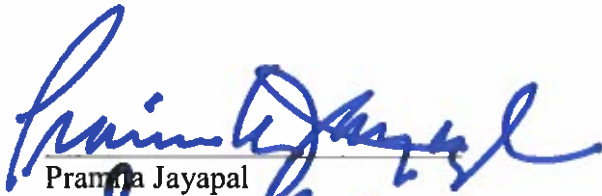
  
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Member of Congress

  
Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

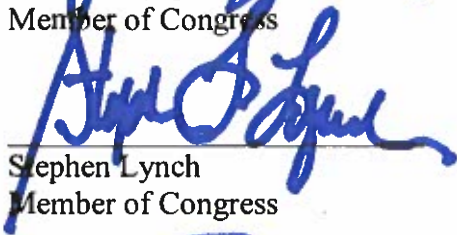
  
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Pramita Jayapal  
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Stephen Lynch  
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John K. Delaney  
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Marcy Kaptur  
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Yvette D. Clarke  
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William R. Keating  
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Alcee L. Hastings  
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Scott Peters  
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Diana DeGette  
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Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy  
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CC: Members of the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Committee