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Take Action to Prevent Cuts During National Call-in Days

\$4 billion cut in federal food assistance could be part of deficit reduction proposal

A \$4 billion cut to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) benefits could be in the \$23 billion, 10-year budget reduction package that House and Senate Agriculture Committee leaders intend to forward to the Select Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction (Super Committee). The Super Committee is charged with proposing a way to reduce the federal deficit by \$1.2 to \$1.5 trillion over the next 10 years. A SNAP cut of this magnitude could harm thousands of low-income Texas families who struggle to put food on the table. It would also harm the food industry, Texas agriculture, food retailers and cost jobs. Our state and local economies receive an enormous boost from SNAP spending, particularly during a recession. Last year, 3.6 million Texans received SNAP assistance, pouring over \$5 billion into the economy and generating a total of \$9.1 billion in overall economic activity. Low-income Texans should not be asked to bear the burden of budget cuts. Congress has smarter and fairer ways at its disposal to reduce to balance the budget and resolve our long-term deficit problem, through a balanced package of selected tax increases and careful spending cuts.

SNAP plays a critical role in preventing hunger and improving nutrition

Almost one in five Texas households (18.8 percent, or 1.7 million households) struggle to afford food, according to the latest report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, [Household Food Security in the United States in 2010](#). “Food insecurity”—the term used to describe the inability to afford enough nutritious food—leads to poor nutritional health, prevents children from learning, and compromises the health of aging Texans. Food insecurity also undermines the health and preparedness of our future workforce and our economic competitiveness.

SNAP is the backbone of the safety net that helps the neediest Americans afford to buy food. With so many Texans facing food insecurity, SNAP plays an essential role in ensuring adequate nutrition by increasing the food purchasing of low-income households. Most SNAP recipients have incomes below the poverty line; three-quarters of beneficiaries are children, seniors or have disabilities.

SNAP is particularly important during bad economic times. Since the recession hit Texas in December 2008, enrollment has jumped 42 percent. Today, 3.6 million Texans rely on SNAP benefits to put food on the table. In addition to supplementing the food budgets of low-income families, SNAP benefits provide an economic stimulus in the low-income communities where benefits are spent, which stimulates the overall economy by creating jobs and enabling low-income working families to spend their income on other goods and services. Last year, \$5.6 billion in SNAP spending in Texas generated \$9.1 in overall economic activity. When the economy begins to rebound, the reliance on SNAP benefits will decrease, but that upturn has not yet occurred. Enrollment in SNAP continues to grow, preventing thousands of Texas families from falling into poverty each month.



Congress should take a balanced approach to deficit reduction that protects American families and the long-term health of our economy

The Super Ccommittee should propose a balanced package that combines selected revenue increases with careful spending cuts. A cuts-only approach would be devastating to low- and moderate-income Americans because it would require severe cuts to crucial safety net programs like SNAP. Texas would be among the states hit hardest by a cuts-only approach because we have so many low-income families. Every recent bi-partisan proposal has endorsed a balanced approach to deficit reduction that includes significant new revenues. This is because a balanced approach is the only approach that will work without hurting vulnerable Americans and damaging the long-term viability of our economy.

The Agriculture Committees' recommendations are in no way binding, and the scope and specific of the cuts needed in each particular area is not known. What is clear, however, is that while slashing SNAP funding may make a small dent in the federal deficit, it will lead to increased hunger, higher unemployment, and a greater number of Texas families falling below the poverty line. The food and agricultural industries will suffer, leading to job loss and undermining the Texas economy.

Deficit Reduction Timeline

November 23 - Deadline for joint committee to vote on a plan

December 2 - Deadline for joint committee to submit report to President and Congress

December 9 - House and Senate committees of jurisdiction must report a bill without amendment

December 23 - Congress must vote on proposed language

Local SNAP and food insecurity data

To find out how food insecurity affects your community and the benefits that SNAP provide in your county or congressional district, visit our website at <http://www.cppp.org/research.php?aid=1146> .

TAKE ACTION DURING NATIONAL CALL-IN DAYS

Call your Senators toll-free (888-907-1485) during National Call-In Days (November 15-17).

Relay this message:

Protect SNAP, child nutrition programs, and other safety net programs for low-income and vulnerable people from budget cuts by the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction (Super Committee). A balanced approach to reducing the deficit must include revenues.

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