



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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House Farm Bill Proposal Undermines Our Effective, National Response to Hunger
Media Statement from Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks:

“The Farm Bill has historically been bipartisan legislation that acknowledges the interconnectedness of our country’s food systems. It invests in everything from income supports for widely-produced crops, to agricultural research and education, to crop insurance to protect farmers from the immense risk involved in their business, to nutrition programs that help Americans afford the food our farmers produce.

“Ultimately, the Farm Bill impacts everything from how our food is grown to who can afford to purchase it. In order for each of us to have consistent access to wholesome foods, we rely on farmers and producers, distributors, retailers and fellow consumers. The Farm Bill – adjusted every five years or so to remain current with our agricultural needs – has promoted a sustainable food system for decades. It does so through a genuine, bipartisan commitment to ensuring everyone in our ‘food chain’ – from farmers to consumers – have the support they need to fulfill their critical role in this continuum and meet their basic need for food.

“We’re foodbankers. Of course, our primary concern is that the [recently released partisan 2018 House Farm Bill proposal](#) undermines access to basic nutrition assistance for people living on the margins. It will increase hunger and contribute to escalating health care costs. Instead of maintaining our country’s long-term commitment to preventing hunger and ensuring access to basic groceries when our fellow Americans fall on hard times, it kicks older workers and families with children to the curb.

“As an example, this misguided Farm Bill would require a parent with children ages 7 and 9 to immediately enter a mandatory work training program the moment their hours at work are cut in order to continue to feed their families – all in the midst of a household crisis. It would require a 58-year-old to immediately enter a mandatory work training program the moment they receive a layoff notice – costing taxpayers thousands for a worker entering the sunset of their career, rather than providing basic help with food.

“The reality is that most SNAP recipients are children, seniors, people with disabilities or low-wage workers, and on average, each SNAP recipient in Ohio receives just \$122 a month to help buy groceries. These are supposed ‘solutions’ seeking problems that don’t exist.

“More than that, though, this proposal endangers our entire food system. It puts more local grocers and retailers at risk of closing their doors. It puts farmers already struggling to cope with factors from climate change to trade disputes at risk of even further adversity. It is, quite simply, bad policy.

“Ohio’s congressional delegation knows better than this. We urge our members to contemplate the real-world consequences of taking basic food assistance away from older workers and parents with children. We ask them to oppose this Farm Bill, in the name of the 1.4 million Ohioans that need help from SNAP to afford groceries, and in the name of Ohio’s most important economic sector, agriculture.”

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About the Ohio Association of Foodbanks

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is Ohio’s largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio’s 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,300 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2017, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 216 million pounds of food and grocery items. The association has also served as the home of The Ohio Benefit Bank since 2006. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

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