



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 25, 2024

Ohio Association of Foodbanks Statement on U.S. House Agriculture Committee Farm Bill
Media Statement from Joree Novotny, executive director, Ohio Association of Foodbanks

“After hours of discussion and markup, and months of delay, the U.S. House Agriculture Committee passed its *Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024* out of committee early Friday morning. While the legislation as drafted recommends some modest, positive changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), those changes are undercut by a proposal that would erode investments in SNAP and other emergency food assistance programs over time.

“Ohio’s families and local economies have already absorbed a loss of about \$126 million per month in federally funded SNAP benefits in the wake of the pandemic. The statewide study we conducted one year ago when those benefits ended demonstrated clearly that [reductions in SNAP benefits lead to greater hardship](#), more harmful tradeoffs, and an increased need for help from foodbanks. Ohioans experiencing food insecurity have [shared their personal experiences](#) navigating a troubling combination of more expensive groceries and less resources with which to afford them, and their stories mirror what [recent Map the Meal Gap research](#) tells us about the concerning state of hunger in Ohio and across the country.

“Unfortunately, rather than fully funding access to an adequate, wholesome diet, the House Agriculture Committee’s bill language would mean less purchasing power for groceries, as well as reduced investments in The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) over time. TEFAP is a critical source of food for our hunger relief network, and we need a permanent, increased investment to keep families nourished while also supporting a resilient food supply chain we all count on.

“Additionally, the bill does not include continued funding for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program (LFPA), an initiative that [supports local and regional farmers here in Ohio](#) and throughout the country, especially those historically underrepresented in other USDA programs, and helps direct their locally grown foods to people facing hunger. The bill would also restrict the USDA’s ability to direct more TEFAP foods to foodbanks through the use of Commodity Credit Corporation funds during periods of elevated food insecurity, fails to permanently authorize replacement SNAP benefits when customers have their benefits stolen and includes many harmful changes to how SNAP is administered.

“At a time when our neighbors are faced with historically high costs for food and other household expenses and with food insecurity rates trending in the wrong direction, we need a strong farm bill that protects everyone on the food supply chain, from farmer to grocer to family. We urge Ohio’s congressional delegation to insist on a farm bill that fully invests in food and economic security. Ohio’s foodbanks and the households we serve need more help, not less.”

###

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 3,600 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2023, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute more than 256 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

Contact: Joree Novotny, Executive Director for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks
614-273-5818 (cell) – or – jnovotny@ohiofoodbanks.org