Across the state, far too many Missourians are struggling to put food on the table. Hunger has increased dramatically in Missouri over the past decade, faster than in any other state in the nation. In 2016, nearly 500,000 Missourians lived in households experiencing hunger.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), previously known as Food Stamps, is our nation’s most effective tool to combat this need.

Though a modest benefit, the SNAP program is very effective at improving nutrition, resulting in improved health outcomes and lower health care costs, particularly for children.

SNAP is authorized through the Farm Bill, which is due to be reauthorized.

Unfortunately, the House Agriculture Committee’s Farm Bill imposes harsher work requirements that fail to account for the realities of Missourians who utilize SNAP, and would do little to help families become economically independent.

The limited exemptions included in the bill, will not protect families with children, seniors and Missourians with a disability from the harmful impacts of lost benefits.

Most healthy-working age Missourians who utilize SNAP are working in low-wage occupations that do not provide regular hours or benefits like sick leave.

More punitive work requirements would not account for periods when workers’ hours temporarily fall below 20 hours a week due to layoffs, seasonal employment, illness or when a worker is caring for a sick school age child or parent.

Benefit sanctions for one family member would reduce the total amount of support for the entire family, resulting in reduced nutritional assistance for children, seniors, and Missourians with disabilities.
Under the House Agriculture Committee's Farm Bill proposal:

- Adults age 18-59 who are not disabled or raising a child under age 6 would be required to prove they have worked at least 20 hours per week.

- If the individuals fail to meet the new requirements, they would face a “sanction” resulting in the loss of their SNAP assistance for a full 12 months.

- Missouri would be required to offer job training and education services which would cost the state 15 times the estimated $17.8 million in federal dollars Missouri would receive to pay for those services.

At the same time the proposal would waste taxpayer dollars on poorly-designed, under-funded employment services instead of providing robust education and training programs.

Federal funding provided would largely be spent on a system to track employment and training hours and would provide little support beyond the most basic services such as access to computers, copiers, or other job search materials.

The cost of any additional services (such as training tied to in demand occupations or any individualized services) would be shouldered entirely by the state.

**Nearly 1 in 8 Missourians Benefit from SNAP**

The vast majority of SNAP participants live with children, seniors, or persons with disability. While participants in these categories would be exempt from work requirements, a loss in benefits by a family member who is not exempt would cut the entire households’ food budget. Alternately, if the household is compliant, work requirements could result in the loss of a primary caregiver.

Of Missouri’s SNAP families with children, nearly half are in households that would not be exempt from work requirements.

Parents with only school age children (age 6 and older) would be subject to strict work requirements. These families would face increased challenges and costs associated with addressing child care needs, particularly during school holidays and the summer.

**Most SNAP Participants Live in Families with Children, Seniors, or People with Disabilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over 70% are in families with children</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 in 3 are in families with seniors or people with disabilities</td>
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**Most Families with Children Would Not Be Exempt From Work Requirements**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey (ACS), Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), 2011-2016.
Most SNAP Participants Who Can Work Are Already Working

Most SNAP households that can work, do work:¹⁰

- 56% of Missouri families that utilize SNAP include at least one member who has worked in the past year
- An additional 33% of households contain no healthy working age adults.

Unfortunately, many of these workers are in low wage occupations with irregular schedules that provide few opportunities for paid leave. These workers utilize SNAP to supplement low pay or rely on SNAP during short periods of joblessness often related to temporary health issues, caregiving responsibilities, or the seasonal nature of their work.¹¹

Harsh work requirements would cut benefits to working households whose hours temporarily fall below 20 hours per week or who are forced to leave work due to illness or to care for an aging parent or sick child.

Older Workers Face Obstacles to Employment But Are Not Exempt

Over 1 in 4 SNAP households contain at least one member who is over age 50, but under age 60 (at which point recipients are exempt from work requirements).¹² For the first time, SNAP participants in this age group would be subject to strict work requirements. Over 100,000 Missourians between ages 50-59 live in SNAP households and many experience substantial barriers to employment including gaps in education and skills or age discrimination by employers. Once unemployed over half of workers 50+ remain unemployed for at least 27 weeks, a rate substantially higher than among younger workers.¹³

Missouri Workers in Many Low-Wage Occupations Rely on Food Assistance to Make Ends Meet

Proportion of Missouri Workers in These Occupations that Live in SNAP Households

- Nearly 1 in 3 nursing, psychiatric, & home health aides
- More than 1 in 4 cashiers
- Nearly 1 in 4 workers in food preparation & serving occupations
- More than 1 in 5 workers in building & grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey (ACS), Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), 2011-2016.
NOTES

1. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Chairman Conaway’s Farm Bill Would Increase Food Insecurity and Hardship,” April 18, 2018


5. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Chairman Conaway’s Farm Bill Would Increase Food Insecurity and Hardship”, April, 2018

6. LaDonna Pavetti, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Farm Bill Funding for Work Programs Won’t Buy Much” April, 2018

7. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Chairman Conaway’s Farm Bill Would Increase Food Insecurity and Hardship,” April, 2018

8. LaDonna Pavetti, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Farm Bill Funding for Work Programs Won’t Buy Much” April, 2018

9. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Missouri Food Stamp Program”, March, 2018

10. U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey (ACS), Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), 2011-2016


12. U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey (ACS), Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), 2011-2016