

April 9, 2018

U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Re: The United States Department of Agriculture's Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR)

The United States Department of Agriculture's Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) on 23 February 2018—seeking comment on regulatory or other changes to better fulfill the original purpose of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—is a welcome sign that the Trump Administration is ready and able to do the right thing for taxpayers and SNAP recipients alike.

We urge the USDA to implement reforms that prioritize work and move able-bodied adults from welfare to work. We have witnessed the positive effects of work on those trapped in dependency and know that policies that encourage work will benefit not just able-bodied adults who are freed from welfare, but the truly needy as well.

Food stamps are not meant to be a permanent entitlement for able-bodied adults without children—instead, they should be a temporary aid to the most vulnerable. As Ronald Reagan once said, “The only true measure of a welfare program's success is how many people it makes independent of welfare.” We could not agree more.

That is why it is so troubling that, for the past two decades, policies and loopholes have further trapped able-bodied adults in welfare instead of empowering them to work. From 2000 to 2008, the number of able-bodied, childless adults receiving food stamps hovered at or below one million; by 2015, this number had reached nearly five million. Even more troubling, 75 percent of these adults do not work at all. Some states have exploited gimmicks to waive work requirements for able-bodied adults, flooding the welfare rolls and threatening resources for the truly needy.

As elected state legislators from 27 states, we urge SNAP regulatory changes that center on one simple and overriding principle—able-bodied adults without children *must* be required to work, train, or volunteer in order to receive benefits. There is an opportunity for change—and the USDA is to be commended for seizing it.

Sincerely, the undersigned

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