

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

May 3, 2013

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Cochran,

We are writing to express our support for fully funding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the next Farm Bill. SNAP provides essential nutrition benefits to working families, children, senior citizens, and disabled individuals in every state and town in our country. Many program beneficiaries receive only about \$30.00 a week for food, and within this limited budget they struggle to provide healthy, nutritious meals for themselves and their family.

SNAP plays a critical role not just in alleviating poverty and food insecurity, but also in improving dietary intake and health, especially among children. At this time of growing concern about obesity and chronic disease, enabling families to purchase sufficient healthy foods to meet their needs is more important than ever. Based on national food consumption data, each additional SNAP dollar increases a household's overall dietary quality score (as measured by USDA's Healthy Eating Index). Research also shows that children enrolled in the SNAP program perform better in school and are less likely to suffer from health complications like metabolic syndrome and failure-to-thrive.

SNAP also plays a critical role at a stressful time in the life of families. The SNAP Program allows struggling families to put groceries on the table when they face financial troubles, and as their economic situation recovers families withdraw from the program. In fact half of SNAP participants entering the program are enrolled for 10 months or less.

SNAP is an essential safety net program that has touched the lives of millions of Americans. Researchers estimate that half of all American children will receive SNAP at some point during childhood, and half of all adults will do so at some point between the ages of 20 and 65 years. Furthermore, SNAP recipients are diverse with regards to race-ethnicity, many have earned income, and the vast majority of SNAP households do not receive cash welfare benefits.

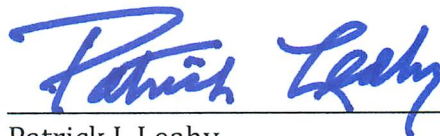
SNAP provides a vital supplement to struggling families as they juggle their other household expenses including heat, shelter, child care, transportation, medicine, and health care. Both low-income and non low-income families spend more on heating fuel when the weather turns cold, but poor families tend to spend a larger share of income on shelter cost and less on food to compensate. Research shows that children and elderly individuals eat less in the winter and the quality of their diet decreases as resources are shifted to pay for increased heating costs.

Please consider the needs of these struggling families, children, and senior citizens as you negotiate the next Farm Bill and protect SNAP from funding cuts.

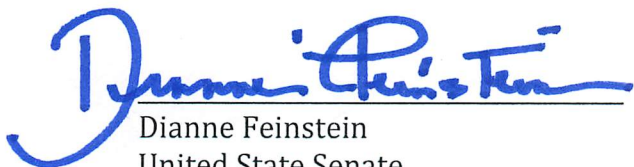
Sincerely,



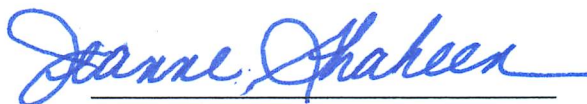
Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United State Senate



Patrick J. Leahy
United State Senate




Dianne Feinstein
United State Senate



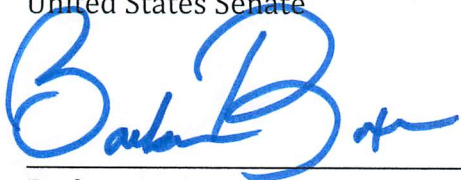
Jeanne Shaheen
United State Senate



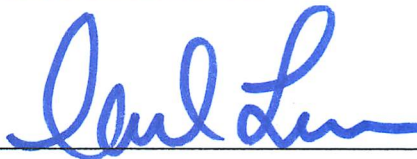
Sherrod Brown
United States Senate



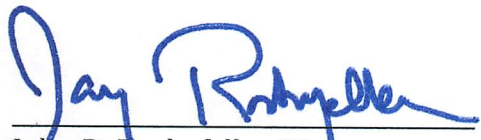
William M. Cowan
United States Senate



Barbara Boxer
United State Senate



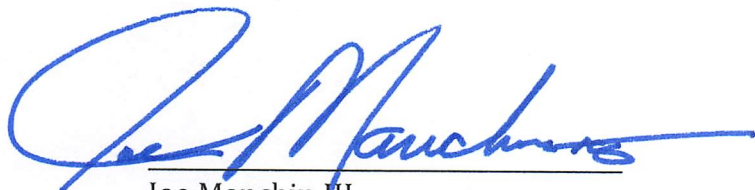
Carl Levin
United State Senate



John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senate



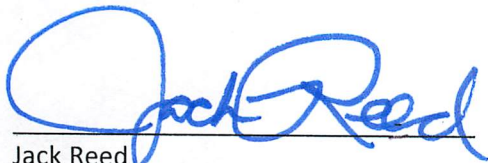
Ron Wyden
United States Senate



Joe Manchin III
United States Senate



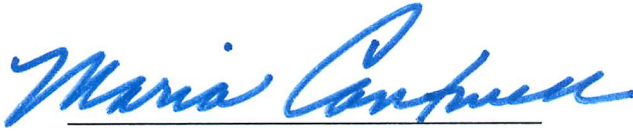
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate



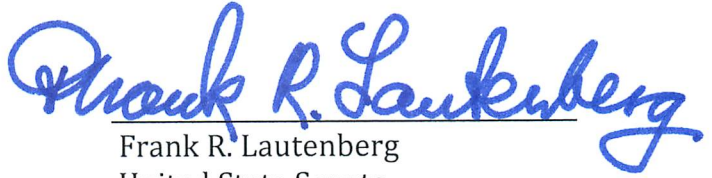
Jack Reed
United State Senator



Barbara A. Mikulski
United State Senator



Maria Cantwell
United State Senate



Frank R. Lautenberg
United State Senate



Robert Menendez
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Benjamin L. Cardin
United State Senate



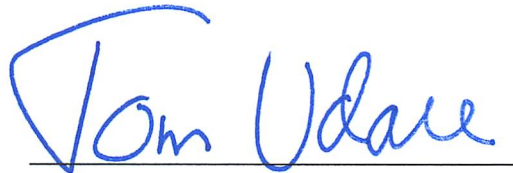
Bernard Sanders
United State Senate



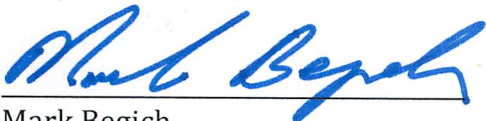
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United State Senate



Sheldon Whitehouse
United State Senate



Tom Udall
United State Senate



Mark Begich
United State Senate



Al Franken
United State Senate



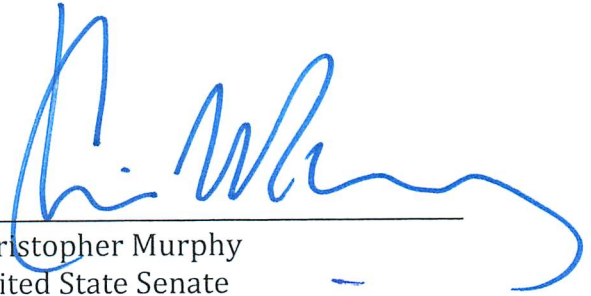
Christopher A. Coons
United State Senate



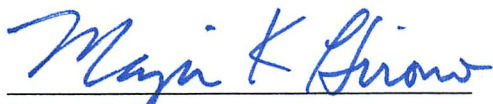
Richard Blumenthal
United State Senate



Tammy Baldwin
United State Senate



Christopher Murphy
United State Senate



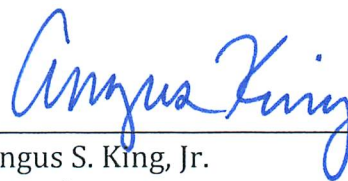
Mazie K. Hirono
United State Senate



Elizabeth Warren
United State Senate



Jeff Merkley
United State Senate



Angus S. King, Jr.
United State Senate



Bill Nelson
United State Senator