



May 23, 2024

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
400 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Scott
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
468 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Scott,

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) Financial Security and Poverty Task Force write to express our strong concern with the proposed changes to future Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) benefit adjustments outlined in the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024: Discussion Draft (House Farm Bill). This proposal would block Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits from keeping pace with the cost of a healthy, realistic diet, which the Congressional Budget Office projects would cut benefits by almost \$30 billion over the next 10 years. If enacted, this would be the largest cut to SNAP in almost 30 years, and these cuts would grow much deeper over time. Every SNAP participant would receive less to buy groceries in the future than they would under current law. This represents a serious threat to the health of nearly 14 million people with disabilities who rely on SNAP to put food on the table.

CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society free from racism, ableism, sexism, and xenophobia, as well as LGBTQ+ based discrimination and religious intolerance.

In the United States, all too often food insecurity and disability go together. Families that include people with disabilities are two to three times more likely to experience food insecurity than families that have no members with disabilities. Similarly, people experiencing food insecurity have increased likelihood of chronic illness and disability.

By increasing access to adequate, nutritious food, SNAP plays a key role in reducing hunger and helping people with disabilities to maximize their health and participate in their communities. SNAP benefits have served as an important lifeline as the price of food has skyrocketed in recent years. From 2019 to 2023, the all-food Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 25 percent. But inflation is not the only factor that influences the cost of a healthy diet. Beyond inflation, people with disabilities face additional food affordability challenges because many have allergies, food sensitivities, or other health conditions that require a specialized diet and higher grocery bills.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s 2021 update to the TFP resulted in modest but overdue improvements to SNAP benefits that have enabled people with disabilities to afford more of the foods they need. For example, the inclusion of some easier-to-prepare foods such as canned beans and pre-cut foods in the 2021 TFP helped make SNAP benefit levels better reflect the reality of what beneficiaries—especially those with mobility and/or manual dexterity challenges—actually buy.

The proposal in the House Farm Bill to freeze the cost of the TFP outside of inflation adjustments, even if nutrition guidelines or other factors change the cost of an adequate diet, would erode benefits over time and have a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities. We urge you not to advance this proposal and to work on a bipartisan basis to strengthen and protect SNAP.

Sincerely,

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Autism Society of America
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)
National Disability Institute (NDI)
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC)
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR)
RespectAbility
The Arc of the United States