

May 20, 2024

The Honorable GT Thompson  
Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Scott  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, & Forestry  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, &  
Forestry  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear House and Senate Agriculture Committee Leadership:

The undersigned organizations, representing consumers and taxpayers, as well as limited government and free market interests, write to express our opposition to imposing product restrictions on existing eligible grocery items covered under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We believe that having the federal government pick and choose what consumers can buy would be a significant overreach and is highly likely to result in higher taxes for consumers. Therefore, we strongly oppose the inclusion of this provision, or similar language, into the 2023 Farm Bill.

Our overarching concern is the proposed "Healthy SNAP" Act, which a number of lawmakers are attempting to jam into this iteration of the Farm Bill. This misguided proposal would remove a wide variety of everyday grocery items from SNAP eligibility, thereby infringing on consumer choice and creating a bad precedent that would most affect families in the unenviable position of receiving government help to pay for their groceries.

We object to the premise that government officials know better than individuals. Consumers, whether they are SNAP beneficiaries or not, should be allowed to make their own educated decisions in determining for themselves what foods and beverages to serve their families. They should not be subjected to top-down directives from policymakers and bureaucrats in Washington.

Furthermore, provisions in the Healthy SNAP Act would empower federal government bureaucrats to continuously impose prohibitions on grocery items they disfavor for an ever-widening number of reasons. As in the past, such a dynamic would surely be followed by calls to subject consumers to excise or "sin" taxes on those products. Today, the target may be treats not necessary to daily sustenance, or occasional snacks, but

future regulation could be used against any food producer as well as politically disfavored products like red meat, whole milk or farmed fish, for example.

The new regulatory framework in the Healthy SNAP Act would significantly increase the SNAP's administrative costs. It would take significant resources to manage eligible versus ineligible products, track them, and communicate that information to states and retailers. This will add to the taxpayer burden at both the state and federal level, as SNAP's administrative expenses are split equally between federal and state governments.

Our coalition deeply understands the need to address the rising cost of the Farm Bill. Many of the undersigned groups have proffered a number of solutions to address the need for comprehensive reform in this area. Yet we are skeptical of arguments that restricting certain products from SNAP eligibility would yield the savings promised by the authors of the Healthy SNAP Act. Restricting SNAP purchases won't make Americans healthier, nor will it save money, but it will add more bureaucracy to the program and set a precedent for government intrusion into purchasing decisions made by everyday Americans.

Sincerely,

Mario H. Lopez  
President  
Hispanic Leadership Fund

Matthew Kandrach  
President  
Consumer Action for a Strong Economy

Saulius "Saul" Anuzis  
President  
60 Plus Association

Phil Kerpen  
President  
American Commitment

Bob Carlstrom  
President  
AMAC Action

George Landrith  
President  
Frontiers of Freedom

Ryan Ellis  
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Center for a Free Economy

James L. Martin  
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The American Consumer Institute

Charles Sauer  
President  
Market Institute

Tom Schatz  
President  
Council for Citizens Against Government  
Waste

Nan E. Swift  
Fellow  
R Street Institute

CC: The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Steve Scalise  
House Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Tom Emmer  
Majority Whip  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Katherine Clark  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives