



**For Immediate Release:**

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

**For More Information Contact:**

Diane Doherty  
Executive Director, Illinois Hunger Coalition  
773-896-6269  
[dianedihc@aol.com](mailto:dianedihc@aol.com)

Jena Wallander  
Communications and Evaluation Coordinator, Illinois Hunger Coalition  
(312) 629-9580  
[jwallander@ilhunger.org](mailto:jwallander@ilhunger.org)

**Illinois Hunger Coalition Applauds the 2018 Bipartisan Farm Bill Agreement that Protects the Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP).**

Chicago, IL—Today, December 11, the Senate voted to confirm the 2018 Farm Bill, legislation that protects SNAP participants across the country and Illinois. On December 10, the Farm Bill Conference report was released, a bipartisan effort that ensures that struggling children and families, seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities have help in putting food on their tables. The Conference Committee soundly rejected the harmful SNAP provisions found in the original House version of the bill, and instead encouraged and promoted policies that support successful approaches to job training and other employment-related activities. The Illinois Hunger Coalition (IHC) commends this effort to protect the 1 in 7 vulnerable individuals in Illinois who participate in SNAP in order to have greater access to affordable and healthy food.

This agreement ensures that SNAP will continue to be a proven weapon against hunger among children and their parents, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and hard-working people with low pay and inconsistent hours who struggle to make ends meet. That includes more than 1.8 million people in Illinois alone who benefit from this vital program.

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“This is a good step forward in protecting our nation’s most powerful and effective anti-hunger program,” said Diane Doherty, Executive Director of the statewide IHC. “We applaud the Illinois Members of Congress who fought hard to keep SNAP strong for Illinois’ most vulnerable residents and we encourage all members of the Illinois congressional delegation to represent all of their constituents by supporting this bill as it moves towards legislation.”

Throughout the year, the IHC advocated against the harmful provisions in the House version of the bill that would have taken food off the tables of Illinois families and also resulted in decreased access to other child nutrition programs in the state. IHC organized their membership in support of a bipartisan approach and against the House bill when it was defeated in April, and again in June when it was ultimately passed. During the conference proceedings, IHC sent a letter signed by Illinois residents and community-based organizations to all the Illinois members of Congress, including the three representatives on the conference committee, urging them to protect SNAP from cuts that would hurt the program.

SNAP has had historic, bipartisan support, and the IHC salutes the House and Senate negotiators for continuing that tradition by working together, across party lines, to protect vital food assistance in the Farm Bill agreement.

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*The Illinois Hunger Coalition (IHC), founded in 1988, is celebrating 30 years of anti-hunger advocacy. The IHC seeks to #endhungernow by ending hunger’s underlying causes through community organizing, advocating for progressive policy, and public education.*