



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

September 18, 2013

Dear Representative:

I am writing on behalf of the AFL-CIO to urge you to oppose the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013, (H.R. 3102). This inhumane legislation would have a devastating impact on the millions who need the federal food assistance provided by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013 would deprive hungry individuals and families of federal food assistance by reducing funding for the program by \$40 billion over 10 years and denying SNAP assistance to millions of low-income Americans. This legislation would have a devastating effect as over 80% of households receiving SNAP benefits already have gross incomes below the poverty line, while over 40% have gross incomes that are less than half the poverty line. Cuts already scheduled to take effect November 1, 2013 will leave the average SNAP benefit only \$1.30 per person, per meal.

H.R. 3102 will particularly hurt jobless and low-wage workers who want to earn a decent living but cannot find enough work in our weak economy or earn enough to make ends meet. It would encourage states to require parents with children over age 1 to work or participate in a training program for a minimum of 20 hours a week. However, despite the scarcity of jobs that pay a living wage or part-time jobs that offer enough hours, HR. 3102 provides no funds to create any jobs or training programs.

The Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013 also would end SNAP assistance to adults ages 18-50 without children after three months if they have not been able to find at least half-time work, even if they live in a community with extraordinarily high unemployment. This proposal alone would cause between 2 to 4 million poor jobless individuals, most of whom have incomes below half the poverty line, to lose food assistance.

H.R. 3102 would also eliminate the “categorical eligibility” option available to states for these families who struggle to pay for childcare and housing costs and have little left over to buy food. Many of these households currently qualify for SNAP because they are eligible for other low-income assistance. This provision would end SNAP benefits for approximately 1.8 million people in low-wage working households.

H.R. 3102 would punish unemployed workers for not being able to find stable employment that pays a decent wage and deprive children of food assistance even though their parents have little or nothing left after paying rent, utilities, childcare and other necessary expenses.

The Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013 would deny millions of children, seniors, disabled, low income and unemployed Americans food assistance during a prolonged period of anemic job growth, declining or stagnating wages and growing income inequality.

We strongly urge you to oppose passage of this cruel legislation.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department