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This Thanksgiving, 140 Members of Congress Support Adams-Harris Bill to Expand and Strengthen SNAP Benefits

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To: Caldwell, Anissa [Anissa.Caldwell@mail.house.gov]

This Thanksgiving, 140 Members of Congress Support Adams-Harris Bill to Expand and Strengthen SNAP Benefits

WASHINGTON, D.C. – This Thanksgiving season, 16 Members of Congress joined **Congresswoman Alma Adams** as well as **U.S. Senators Kamala D. Harris (D-CA) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT), among others**, in supporting the *Closing the Meal Gap Act*, legislation that expands and strengthens Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for vulnerable community members that are struggling to make ends meet. With food banks experiencing skyrocketing demand across the country, the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically increased the need for SNAP to combat food insecurity.

Congresswoman Alma Adams [originally introduced](#) the Closing the Meal Gap Act in 2017 before introducing it again in 2019. The *Closing the Meal Gap Act* has been [endorsed by Feeding America and the Food Research and Action Center](#) and currently has [139 cosponsors in the House](#).

“Even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, more than [thirty-five million](#) Americans struggled every day to put food on their table. Now, it’s even clearer that the SNAP benefits are simply not generous enough to provide the help people need,” **said Congresswoman Adams**. “Feeding America reports that, due to the pandemic, more than [fifty million](#) Americans may experience food insecurity in 2020, which is why strengthening the SNAP is more important than ever. This Thanksgiving, no family should go without food on their table.”

New cosponsors include **Representatives Luis Correa (CA-46), Alan Lowenthal (CA-47), Tom O'Halleran (AZ-01), Donald Payne (NJ-10), Mikie Sherrill (NJ-11), Juan Vargas (CA-51), Susan Wild (PA-07), Gerald Connolly (VA-11), Madeleine Dean (PA-04), Jared Huffman (CA-02), Doris Matsui (CA-06), Joseph Morelle (NY-25), Terri Sewell (AL-07), Albio Sires (NJ-08), Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-08), and Brendan Boyle (PA-02).**

The *Closing the Meal Gap Act* is endorsed by The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), Feeding America, Share Our Strength, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, Miami-Dade County, the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative, the NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, RESULTS: The Power to End Poverty, and Loaves & Fishes (NC).

SNAP is one of our nation’s most important and effective anti-hunger programs; it has been proven to [decrease food insecurity and poverty and improve long-term health outcomes](#) for recipients. However, the rising cost of food in our country outpaces SNAP benefits each year, forcing families to choose between putting food on their tables and covering other important expenses. SNAP benefits provide a mere [\\$1.39 per meal](#). That’s partially

because benefit levels are based on the Thrifty Food Plan, a restrictive model used to calculate food costs that does not meet the needs of today's low wage workers and their families. **The latest [USDA Household Food Security](#) report showed that the typical U.S. household spent 28 percent more on food than Thrifty Food Plan estimates.**

The Closing the Meal Gap Act which would help families put food on the table by modernizing and improving SNAP to meet the needs of the moment.

The Closing the Meal Gap Act of 2019 will:

- **Support seniors and people with disabilities who face high medical costs** by permanently authorizing the standard medical deduction in every state at a minimum of \$140. Individuals with high expenses could continue to apply for a higher, itemized medical deduction.
- **Increase benefits by approximately 30 percent** by modernizing the SNAP formula to better take into account for the cost of nutritious food and household needs and raising the minimum SNAP benefit from \$16 to \$25 per month.
- **Ease the burden on families living in areas with high rent and utility costs** by eliminating the cap on the Excess Shelter Deduction to better take into account the cost of living for these SNAP recipients.
- **Provide relief for college students struggling to earn an education** by allowing full-time and half-time students who qualify for SNAP to be exempt from work requirements.

Text of the bill can be found [here](#).


Cosponsors of the *Closing the Meal Gap Act* in the 116th Congress include **Representatives Aguilar, Barragán, Bass, Beatty, Bishop, Jr., Blumenauer, Boyle, Brown, Brownley, Butterfield, Carbajal, Cárdenas, Carson, Castro, Chu, Cicilline, Clark, Clarke, Clay, Cleaver, Cohen, Connolly, Correa, Cox, Crist, Cummings, Davis, Dean, DeGette, DeLauro, DelBene, DeSaulnier, Deutch, Doyle, Eshoo, Espaillat, Evans, Gallego, Garamendi, García (IL), Garcia (TX), Gomez, Gonzalez, Grijalva, Haaland, Hastings, Hayes, Heck, Huffman, Jackson Lee, Jayapal, Johnson (TX), Kaptur, Keating, Kennedy, Khanna, Kilmer, Krishnamoorthi, Langevin, Larsen, Lawson, Lee (CA), Levin (MI), Lewis, Lieu, Lofgren, Lowenthal, Lujan, Lynch, Malinowski, C. Maloney, S. Maloney, Matsui, McEachin, McGovern, McNerney, Meeks, Meng, Moore, Morelle, Moulton, Nadler, Napolitano, Neal, Neguse, Norton, O'Halleran, Ocasio-Cortez, Omar, Pallone, Payne, Perlmutter, Peters, Pingree, Pocan, Pressley, Price, Raskin, Rice (NY), Richmond, Rouda, Roybal-Allard, Ruppertsberger, Rush, Ryan, Sánchez, Sarbanes, Scanlon, Schakowsky, Schiff, Schrier, Serrano, Sewell, Sherman, Sherrill, Sires, Smith, Soto, Speier, Swalwell, Takano, Thompson (CA), Tlaib, Tonko, Torres, Trahan, Vargas, Veasey, Velazquez, Wasserman Schultz, Waters, Watson Coleman, Welch, Wild, and Wilson; Senators Harris, Gillibrand, Sanders, and Menendez.**

Congresswoman Alma Adams represents North Carolina's 12th Congressional District (Charlotte) and serves as Vice Chair of the House

Committee on Agriculture. Additionally, she serves on the House Financial Services Committee and the House Education & Labor Committee, where she serves as Chair of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee.

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