

Adams Introduces Legislation to Expand SNAP Benefits for College Students



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Hello Sarah,

Adams Introduces Legislation to Expand SNAP Benefits for College Students

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 11, 2023) – **Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12)** and **Congressman Jimmy Gomez (CA-34)**, along with **Reps. Josh Harder (CA-10), Jimmy Panetta (CA-20), Jim Costa (CA-21)**, and nearly 100 Members of Congress introduced legislation to address the growing crisis of food insecurity among college students. The *Enhance Access to SNAP Act of 2023* or *EATS Act* permanently expands Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility to millions of college students experiencing hunger daily.

Currently, burdensome "work for food" rules unfairly restrict access to SNAP for students and impede student learning, health, and stability. While temporary statutory authority created public health emergency exemptions to the general SNAP college student eligibility provisions, these exemptions will end shortly after the expiration of the Public Health emergency on May 11th.

Senator Kristen Gillibrand is introducing companion legislation in the Senate.

According to the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice food insecurity impacts 39% of students at two-year institutions and 29% of students at four-year institutions. Additionally, 75% of Indigenous, 70% of Black, and 70% of American Indian or Alaska Native students across two- and four-year institutions experienced basic needs insecurity, especially food insecurity.

"As a college professor for four decades, I've seen what happens when students go hungry. Food security programs shouldn't punish students for pursuing the education they need to be successful in the workforce, and in life," **said Congresswoman Alma Adams, a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee.** "That's why the Act extends pandemic era improvements to SNAP that prevent student hunger and eliminate burdensome obligations that hinder student performance. Passing the EATS Act means low-income students will no longer choose between their meals and their education. We should pass this legislation now because every day we fail to act is another day our low-income students fall further behind."

"The fight to end food insecurity is personal to me because my siblings and I relied on free meals at school and during the summers to stay healthy and fed when I was young," **said Rep. Gomez.** "For so many, higher education is unattainable not just because of skyrocketing tuition costs but also because of the lack of food security. I'm introducing the EATS Act to break down barriers to higher education and ensure no student goes to bed hungry. Our legislation is a necessary step to provide an equitable, healthy learning environment for all of our country's bright young minds."

"This is a commonsense bill – we know our students can't learn if they're hungry. One in three college students face food insecurity meaning millions of young people aren't able to live up to their potential," **said Rep. Harder.** "If we want to set future generations up for success, we have to make sure they are getting the nutrition they need. This bill does just that by extending access to SNAP to college students. It's a no-brainer if we care about our future."

"With emergency COVID-19 SNAP benefits for college students set to expire next month, we need to simplify eligibility for critical SNAP benefits to combat food insecurity plaguing low-income college students across New York State and the country," **said Senator Gillibrand.** "The EATS Act would eliminate work-for-food barriers for low-income students and ensure that as many as 4 million college students nationwide can access the SNAP benefits needed to learn and thrive. College students should never have to choose between food and their education - the time to act is now."

"We applaud Rep. Gomez for his steadfast leadership to ensure college students have equitable access to SNAP to fuel their health and learning," said Luis Guardia, President of the Food Research &

Action Center. "The EATS Act will create brighter futures for our students, and our nation."

"Hunger should not be a part of the American college experience. Students should be able to focus on school without having to worry where their next meal will come from. As a result of the temporary assistance from the Covid Public Health Emergency ending, on average [one-person households will lose \\$132 a month](#) and for many students SNAP benefits will end completely. Being a starving student is not a rite of passage," said **Kristin McGuire, Executive Director of Young Invincibles**. "Lacking secure and stable access to food causes severe health impacts and interrupts their pursuit of a degree. We've seen how impactful SNAP temporary pandemic benefits have been -- eliminating this assistance or blunting their impact with work requirements would be a major step backwards for students. Young Invincibles is proud to support the Enhance Access to SNAP Act of 2023 and continue to invest in the success of young adults."

Background

Adams is a champion on hunger and food security issues. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports more than 34 million people, including 9 million children, are struggling with food insecurity in the United States. Due to the scope of the hunger crisis both locally and nationally, the Congresswoman founded the Adams Hunger Initiative in 2015.

Due in part to Rep. Adams' work, the average monthly SNAP benefit increased by 27 percent per person in 2021. Earlier this year, Congresswomen Adams and Barbara Lee reintroduced the Improving Access to Nutrition Act, which seeks to lift the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's (SNAP) three-month limit and ensure that all Americans have access to nutritious food and the ability to stay healthy in everyday life.

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. represents North Carolina's 12th Congressional District (Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Cabarrus County) and serves on the House Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Education & the Workforce, where she serves as ranking member of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee.

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