

New: Adams, Fetterman, and Casar Introduce Bill to Provide SNAP Benefits for Striking Workers



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Hello Sarah,

New: Adams, Fetterman, and Casar Introduce Bill to Provide SNAP Benefits for Striking Workers

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 27, 2023, 11:00 AM EDT) – Today, **Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12), U.S. Senator John Fetterman (D-PA), and Congressman Greg Casar (TX-35),** introduced the *Food Secure Strikers Act of 2023*, legislation to allow striking workers to qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

The introduction of this bill comes as several high-profile strikes are currently taking place in across the country, including workers with the Writers Guild of America and Screen Actors Guild. As a senior member of both the Agriculture Committee and the Education & the Workforce Committee, Congresswoman Adams is a leader on food security and labor issues in the United States Congress.

“No one in the United States should go hungry, especially for exercising rights guaranteed by law. That’s why I’m proud to join my colleagues in leading the Food Secure Strikers Act,” **said Congresswoman Adams, Ranking Member of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee of the House Education & the Workforce Committee.** “This bill ensures striking workers receive SNAP benefits they are entitled to and makes sure strikers and their families are not discriminated against. Strong labor protections and fair pay are the best defense against food insecurity, and we can’t forget we have the labor movement to thank for that progress. I am grateful to partner with Congressman Casar and Senator Fetterman on this legislation at a critical moment for striking workers.”

“We need to get rid of the anti-union provisions in our code that starve striking workers,” **said Rep. Casar.** “We’re seeing workers exercise their rights across the country by going on strike to demand better wages and working conditions. That’s why our bill, the Food Secure Strikers Act, is more important now than ever. We need to stop starving strikers, and ensure all working families are able to make ends meet.”

“Every union worker who is walking the picket line this summer needs to know that we have their back here in Washington,” **said Sen. Fetterman.** “The union way of life is sacred. It’s what built Pennsylvania and this nation. It is critical for us to protect workers’ right to organize, and that includes making sure they and their families have the resources to support themselves while on strike. As Chair of the Nutrition Subcommittee and an advocate for the union way of life, this bill is just plain common sense. I’m proud to introduce this bill that will eliminate the need for workers to choose between fighting for fair working conditions and putting food on the table for their families.”

Currently, striking workers and their households are excluded from SNAP eligibility and cannot receive SNAP benefits unless they were previously eligible before the strike. While union funds can sometimes reduce the financial stress of striking, workers often still face serious financial insecurity when on strike due to loss of income. Further, many striking workers are not union members, meaning they have an even smaller safety net, if any at all. The *Food Secure Strikers Act of 2023* would repeal the restriction on striking workers from receiving SNAP.

House cosponsors include **Reps. Shontel Brown (OH-11), Nikki Budzinski (IL-13), Jasmine Crockett (TX-30), Chris Deluzio (PA-17), Maxwell Alejandro Frost (FL-10), Daniel Goldman (NY-10), Jimmy Gomez (CA-34), Josh Gottheimer (NJ-05), Raul Grijalva (AZ-07), Jahana Hayes (CT-05), Jonathan Jackson (IL-01), Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18), Barbara Lee (CA-13), Summer Lee (PA-12), Morgan McGarvey (KY-03), Jim McGovern (MA-02), Jerrold Nadler (NY-12), Donald Norcross (NJ-01), Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC-AL), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14), Ilhan Omar (MN-05), Chellie Pingree (ME-01), Ayanna Pressley (MA-07), Jan Schakowsky (IL-09), Dina Titus (NV-01), Jill Tokuda (HI-02), and Frederica S. Wilson (FL-24).**

In the Senate, the bill is co-sponsored by **Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Bob Casey (D-PA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bob**

Menendez (D-NJ), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Tina Smith (D-MN), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Peter Welch (D-VT), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

The *Food Secure Strikers Act* is also endorsed by numerous unions and anti-hunger organizations, including the United Food and Commercial Workers, Teamsters, National Education Association, Communications Workers of America, Food Research Action Center, and Hunger-Free America.

“No worker should go hungry for exercising their right to strike for better wages and safer workplaces,” **said Sen. Cory Booker**. “We are in a historic moment for worker power, and we must remain united in our support of workers' well-being as they continue to fight for better conditions. I am proud to join my colleagues in introducing this important legislation that will ensure striking workers and their families have access to food assistance, so all workers have the ability to fight for a more equitable workplace.”

“Any union worker knows, strikes are always a last resort. Workers want to reach a fair agreement, so they can keep going to work and providing for their families. Workers almost never recover all the lost wages from a strike. But sometimes it’s the only option,” **said Sen. Sherrod Brown**. “Our bill would give workers the peace of mind that if they’re backed into a corner, they can stand up to corporate abuse, without the fear of losing their ability to put food on the table.”

“When workers make the difficult decision to strike, they are often doing so for fairer wages and benefits because they cannot afford to live and raise their families. Often times, employers believe they can wait out workers who struggle financially to lure them into a worse agreement,” **Sen. Bob Casey said**. “Workers shouldn’t have to choose between putting food on the table and a fair deal—that’s why I’m cosponsoring the Food Secure Strikers Act.”

“For too long, workers who are striking have risked losing access to their essential SNAP benefits,” **said Sen. Alex Padilla**. “Our workers shouldn’t have to choose between fighting to improve their working conditions and putting food on the table. As food costs rise for families in California and across the nation, we must pass the Food Secure Strikers Act to protect the health and well-being of our workers.”

“Union workers are the backbone of our economy. When they join together to advocate for themselves, they are also fighting for fair wages and better working conditions for every hard-working American. We should support them in their fight for a stronger middle class,” **said Sen. Tina Smith**. “The Food Secure Strikers Act of 2023 is one important way we can do just that. No worker should have to choose between fighting for better working conditions and keeping food on their table.”

“Standing up for fair wages and benefits shouldn’t mean going hungry,” **said Sen. Elizabeth Warren**. “I am glad to cosponsor the Food Secure Strikers Act with Senator Fetterman to support workers across the country and ensure SNAP benefits for striking workers and their families.”

“Workers deserve the chance to call for better compensation and conditions, without worrying about how they’ll make ends meet during a strike,” **said Sen. Peter Welch**. “The Food Secure Strikers Act will help striking workers put food on the table, so they can continue to push for the conditions and benefits they deserve. I’m proud to join Sen. Fetterman and other colleagues to support this pro-labor legislation.”

“Workers fighting for a fair wage should be able to feed their families—and that includes being eligible for food assistance,” **said Sen. Ron Wyden**. “Excluding workers on strike from food aid is outrageous and just morally wrong. That’s why I will fight hard in the Senate to repeal this restriction and ensure families walking the picket line are fed. I’m all in to get the Food Secure Strikers Act signed into law.”

“It’s good to see lawmakers attempting to correct the wrongs of the past by reinstating a benefit for striking workers that never should have been taken away in the first place,” **said Teamsters General President Sean M. O’Brien**. “Congress should never pass laws that punish American workers and hopefully this amendment is a repudiation of that practice.”

“When workers make the incredibly difficult decision to go on strike, they should not have to worry about lack of access to basic nutrition. While support from a union and the community can help alleviate the financial strain workers may face, it is not always enough,” **said UFCW International President Marc Perrone**. “That is why UFCW is

proud to support Sen. Fetterman, Rep. Adams, and Rep. Casar’s Food Secure Strikers Act of 2023. This legislation would ensure that any income-eligible household can access the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program regardless of whether a member of that household is involved in a strike. Now more than ever, we must protect workers who are standing together to improve their working conditions and build the better life they have earned and deserve.”

“Workers who make the difficult decision to go on strike are coming together to lift the standard of living and gain more respect for all working people,” **said Becky Pringle, President of the National Education Association.** “They are prepared to make sacrifices—but going hungry should not be one of them. The Food Secure Strikers Act of 2023 will help ensure that when striking workers stand in solidarity for better working conditions and wages they can receive SNAP benefits so they don’t put themselves and their families at risk.”

The *Food Secure Strikers Act* would:

- Repeal the restriction on striking workers from receiving SNAP and affirmatively protect the eligibility of striking workers to receive SNAP;
- Protect public sector workers who are fired for striking from being “considered to have voluntarily quit” for eligibility purposes; and;
- Clarify that any income-eligible household can receive SNAP benefits regardless of if a member of that household is involved in a strike.

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. represents North Carolina’s 12th Congressional District (Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Cabarrus County). She serves on the House Education and the Workforce Committee as Ranking Member of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee, and on the House Agriculture Committee. She was first elected to Congress and took office in 2014 and is the longest serving member of North Carolina’s Congressional Democrats.

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