

AAFB ADVOCACY UPDATE

January 26, 2017

AAFB

UPDATE FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

Trump Sworn In, Agriculture Secretary Named



Sonny Perdue, the former governor of Georgia, will head to the Senate to be confirmed as Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (USDA). Perdue grew up on a farm, holds a doctorate in veterinary medicine, and has close ties to the agriculture industry. USDA Secretary is a critical cabinet appointment, particularly for millions of Americans struggling with food insecurity, as it oversees 15 nutrition programs including SNAP.

Trump Budget Likely to Propose Block Granting of SNAP

The Hill is reporting that President Trump's budget, which calls for "dramatic cuts," will largely be based off [budget recommendations by the Republican Study Committee](#) (RSC), a caucus of conservative House members. Among other proposals, the RSC plan calls for SNAP to be converted to a block grant program.

While AAFB welcomes the chance to strengthen the nation's most critical nutrition assistance program, we stand *firmly* against the block granting of SNAP. We know that block grant money is capped, so if a plant closes or a recession or natural disaster hits, state lawmakers will have to choose between more Arizonans going hungry or driving up state debt. [You can learn more about block grants from our friends at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities here.](#)

[You can also listen to AAFB's Angie Rodgers explain why this is a bad idea on KJZZ by clicking here.](#)

Congressional Hunger Fact Sheets

With the 115th Congress well under way, we sent our US House Members and Senators our new Hunger Fact Sheets.

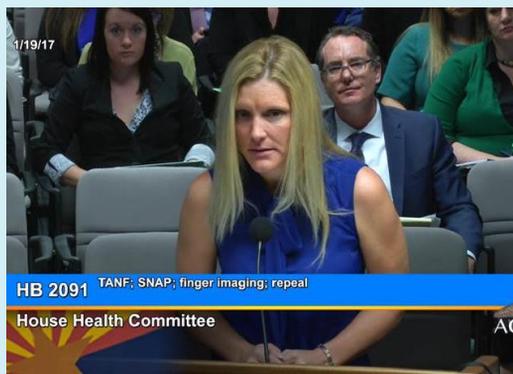
We want our Members of Congress to understand the state of hunger in their district, how it hurts their district, and how SNAP helps alleviate food insecurity in their community.

[You can download AAFB's Congressional Fact Sheets here.](#)

UPDATE FROM THE STATE CAPITOL

HB 2091 Unanimously Passes House Health Committee

State law requires that every SNAP applicant be finger imaged to prevent duplicate enrollments. The total cost of this program is about \$2 million per year, but out of over 1.1 million total applications, only seven were duplicates. The program is ineffective and extremely expensive. HB 2091, a bill sponsored by Rep. John Allen, would end this program. AAFB strongly supports this bill, and our CEO, Angie Rodgers, provided testimony in favor of it during the Health Committee hearing. We're proud to report that HB 2091 passed the House Health Committee unanimously and we'll keep you updated as we learn more!



Watch Out for HB 2298: Pricey and Pointless

HB 2298 proposes that the Arizona Department of Economic Security contract with a vendor to develop an identity verification system for SNAP applicants. The problem: it's pointless. DES already verifies identity and eligibility using over 20 state and federal databases. Additionally, implementing HB 2298 would be pricey; we're waiting to hear exactly how much it would cost, but duplicating efforts DES already undertakes simply makes no sense.

We need to focus on maintaining program integrity in a common-sense way while also remembering that the core purpose of SNAP is to ensure that people have the fuel and nutrition they need so that no child and no family goes to bed hungry day after day, week after week.

Correcting the Record

A [November 2016 study by USDA](#) compared the grocery shopping habits of SNAP households with those not receiving aid. Its central finding? "There were no major differences in the expenditure patterns of SNAP and non-SNAP households, no matter how the data were categorized."

But you wouldn't know that from reading the New York Times' recent front-page story. The misleading headline announced "In the Shopping Cart of a Food Stamp Household: Lots of Soda." [More from TalkPoverty here.](#)