

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Speaker of the House

United States House of Representatives

The Honorable John Boehner

Minority Leader

United States House of Representatives

Members of the House of Representatives

Dear Representatives Pelosi and Boehner and member of the House of Representatives:

As leaders of faith communities, we see first-hand the suffering that food insecurity causes, particularly for families and children. Our children cannot wait any longer for improvements in nutrition programs. We regard passage of Child Nutrition Reauthorization as essential to combating the poverty that is engulfing growing numbers of children in the United States. One in five children in the United States now lives in poverty in our nation, the wealthiest nation in the world. Our faith compels us to speak out and to act on behalf of “the least of these” (Matthew 25: 40).

We write to express our support for S. 3307, the Senate-passed Child Nutrition Bill, but at the same time to express our profound concern that the funding of this bill is not impeded by future cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the program formerly known as Food Stamps. Healthful child nutrition and food for families and individuals living in poverty are equal responsibilities in a society where resources are abundant and the common good is our aim. They are not competing objectives; rather they are worthy and complementary expressions of a national commitment to care for our neighbors. We urge you to find ways to restore cuts to the SNAP program as earnestly as our religious convictions move us to press for your action to pass this bill for the benefit of our children.

A few short months ago we had hopes for a much more effective, long-term bill from the House. The current Senate bill has been weakened by compromise but it is the best remaining hope for some relief for hungry children who face dim prospects for lives of abundance if their early years are compromised by childhood hunger. We implore the House to pass this bill. We have a moral obligation to the most vulnerable among us. These are our children.

Forty-three million Americans are now living in poverty. They are our neighbors, members of our congregations and communities, and Jesus calls them friends. Our Christian faith compels us to speak out and to act for our children and families in need. We trust that your civic duty compels the same.

Grace and Peace,

Bishop John R. Bryant
Presiding Bishop
African Methodist Episcopal Church

Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins
General Minister and President
Christian Church Disciples of Christ

Bishop Thomas L. Hoyt, Jr.
Presiding Bishop
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Mr. Stanley J. Noffsinger
General Secretary
Church of the Brethren

Rev. John McCullough
Executive Director & CEO
Church World Service

Archbishop Khajag S. Barsamian
Diocese of the Armenian Church in America

Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop
The Episcopal Church

Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Fr. Mark Arey
Ecumenical Officer
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Rev. Michael E. Livingston
Executive Director
International Council of Community Churches

Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller
President, Provincial Elders Conference
Moravian Church in America

Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon
General Secretary
National Council of Churches, USA

Rev. Canon Peg Chamberlin
President
National Council of Churches

Mr. Thomas Swain
Presiding
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Society of
Friends

Rev. Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk, Office of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church, USA

Dr. Walter L Parrish, III
General Secretary
Progressive National Baptist Convention

Rev. Wesley S. Granberg-Michaelson
General Secretary
Reformed Church in America

Rev. Geoffrey A. Black
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

Bishop Sharon Zimmeran Rader
Ecumenical Officer for the Council of Bishops
United Methodist Church