

**MAYORS OF BALTIMORE, BOSTON, CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES, LOUISVILLE,
MADISON, MINNEAPOLIS, NEWARK, NEW YORK, OAKLAND, PHILADELPHIA,
PHOENIX, PORTLAND, PROVIDENCE, SALT LAKE CITY, SAN FRANCISCO, SEATTLE,
AND ST. LOUIS**

June 18, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

As you resume your consideration of the Farm Bill, we write regarding our concern about proposed cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides essential food support to families and individuals across the country. As the mayors of major cities across the United States, we see the impact that poverty and poor health have on our most vulnerable residents, and we recognize the role that the SNAP program has played in mitigating these challenges. We urge you to maintain funding for this program and also to consider our suggestions for its improvement.

Today, approximately 47 million Americans, more than half of whom are children and seniors, rely on this program, in many cases during transitional periods of hardship. If enacted, the proposed deep cuts to SNAP would undermine the program's role as a buffer against both food insecurity and poverty – a role that the program should play for all those who can demonstrate the appropriate level of economic need, including the formerly incarcerated who have already paid their debt to society.

We also believe the program can do more to address the pressing challenge of obesity and diet-related disease. More than one third of American adults are now obese, costing approximately \$147 billion per year in associated medical expenses. As a result of obesity, this generation of American children is the first to face the possibility of a shorter life expectancy than their parents. It is time to test and evaluate approaches limiting SNAP's subsidization of products, such as sugar-sweetened beverages, that are contributing to obesity. At the same time, SNAP can also promote healthful eating by providing incentives for the consumption of fruits and vegetables by SNAP recipients, similar to the programs which have been successfully piloted in many of our cities that provide additional spending power to recipients who use their benefits at farmers markets.

Finally, SNAP can also be strengthened by Congressional support for state- and local-level anti-fraud efforts aimed at retailers, to ensure public confidence that food stamp dollars are getting to those in need.

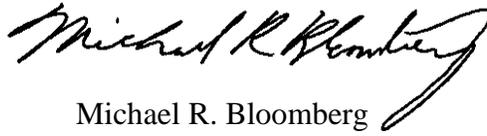
There could not be a more critical time for Congress to create a Farm Bill that protects our nutrition assistance programs and is responsive to the mounting crisis of diet-related disease that we are facing. In our cities we are working to ensure that all of our residents have access to healthy foods and to reduce health disparities across populations. Our ability to advance these goals will be significantly impacted by the next Farm Bill. We believe that your objectives of fiscal responsibility and a healthy future can be met while protecting the most vulnerable and strengthening the nation's most significant nutrition assistance program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ralph Becker
Mayor
Salt Lake City



Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor
City of New York



Cory Booker
Mayor
City of Newark



Rahm Emanuel
Mayor
City of Chicago



Greg Fischer
Mayor
City of Louisville



Charlie Hales
Mayor
City of Portland



Edwin M. Lee
Mayor
City of San Francisco



Michael McGinn
Mayor
City of Seattle



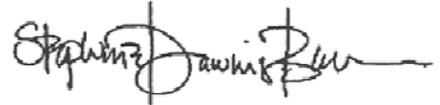
Thomas M. Menino
Mayor
City of Boston



Michael A. Nutter
Mayor
City of Philadelphia



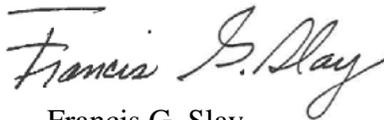
Jean Quan
Mayor
City of Oakland



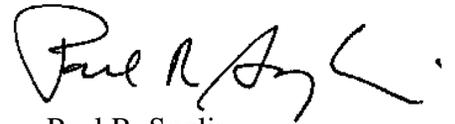
Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor
City of Baltimore



R.T. Rybak
Mayor
City of Minneapolis



Francis G. Slay
Mayor
City of St. Louis



Paul R. Soglin
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Greg Stanton
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City of Providence



Antonio R. Villaraigosa
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City of Los Angeles