The 2018 Farm Bill & National Food Policy Through a Food Bank Lens (in 10 minutes)

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The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018

(a.k.a. The Farm Bill)

Passed (approximately) every 5 Years

Bipartisan
– Still, lots of drama
Three Main Gears

- Environmentalists' Interests
- Anti-Hunger Interests
- Farmers' Interests

...Or, a caravan?

Commodities

SNAP

Conservation + Renewable Energy + Forestry + Horticulture...
Balancing Act

Farmers’ Interests

“Farmers need security and income for small farms is down”

Anti-Hunger Groups’ Interests

“SNAP is the country’s best tool for lifting families and individuals out of poverty”

Conservation /Environmentalists Interests

“Regulations don’t go far enough to protect our ecosystem”
Two Broad Types of Legislation

Authorization Legislation
– Establishes policies and creates programs
  Ex: Farm Bill

Appropriation Legislation
– Funds programs that have been authorized
  – 12 bills
Appropriations Subcommittees

1. Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food & Drug Admin. (FDA)
2. Commerce, Justice, and Science
3. Defense
4. Energy and Water
5. Financial Services and General Government
6. Homeland Security
7. Interior and Environment
8. Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
9. Legislative Branch
10. Military Construction and Veterans Affairs
11. State and Foreign Operations
12. Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development
Two Types of Spending

• Mandatory Spending
  – Legislation that defines the eligibility criteria for participation and the government allocates funds BUT based on use, not a set amount of appropriations;
  – Those enrolled will receive benefits regardless of appropriations process
    • Example: Social Security, Veteran’s Disability, Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans’ Medical Care, and SNAP

• Discretionary Spending
  – Funding legislation that Congress approves annually (can change every year)
The Annual Federal Budget Process

1. Federal agencies submit budgets for review
2. President submits budget request to Congress
3. House Appropriations Subcommittee markup
4. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee markup
5. House floor vote
6. Senate floor vote
7. Conference Committee
8. President vetoes or signs into law
Regular “Normal Order” – The Budgeting Timeline

• President’s Budget – February/March
• Congress’ Budget – Spring
  – Appropriations Committees unite bills in Early Spring
• Conference Committees Negotiate – Late Summer
• Before End of Fiscal Year (Sept 30), conferenced, passed, signed
It’s a well-oiled machine, right? **Well...**

- When Congress does not pass a continuing resolution by October 1, it can result in a government shutdown.

- When Congress can't agree on 12 separate appropriations bills, it will often resort to an “omnibus bill”
  - a single funding bill that encompasses all 12 funding areas
  - “Minibus” = < all12
Budget & Appropriations: Other Federal Nutrition Programs

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Afterschool & Summer Meals
- Congregate Meals/Community Dining
- Home Delivered Meals
- Other (Senior Farmers’ Markets)

- Mandatory
- Discretionary
Current Asks to Congress

The 2018 Farm Bill has **authorized**
- $100 mil in **TEFAP** storage and distribution
- $318 mil in **TEFAP** food purchasing.
- **TEFAP** is the single largest food source of the Feeding America network.

• We need Congress to **appropriate** the full amount in order to continue to reach hungry families across the country.
Current Asks to Community

SNAP ABAWD Time Limit Rule Change

• Under current federal law, states limit SNAP eligibility to just 3 months out of every 3 years for unemployed and underemployed adults without dependent children unless they can document 20 hours of work a week (or ABAWDs, Able- Bodied Adults Without Dependents).
  – Texas already under-utilizes these waivers
  – We’re the cautionary tale for the rest of the country

• USDA’s proposed rule would undercut states’ ability to waive these harsh time limits in many areas where there are too few jobs. By USDA’s own estimates its proposal would eliminate SNAP benefits for an additional 755,000 adults and cut SNAP benefits on a ten year basis by $15 billion.
  
  – We need your help to tell them cutting food assistance for Americans looking for jobs will only lead to more hunger in our country
What You Can Do

• Submit comments @ http://bit.ly/FAUSDAComments

• Text “Comment” to 919-90 to receive the link to submit a comment

• Learn more at http://bit.ly/SNAPRuleCampaign
What You Can Do

• Contact your representatives
  – Who represents me? https://fyi.capitol.texas.gov/

• Call or Email: What do I say?

Examples:
  “I am writing/calling to oppose stricter time limits to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) because
  – we should not make the existing harsh rules even worse by taking away state flexibility or exposing more people to time-limited benefits.”
  – increasing the ability of USDA to deny state waivers for easing harsh SNAP time limits and expanding the people these strict rules apply to will only increase the number of people facing hunger in this country.”

• Share and ask your networks to join you!
What You Can Do

VOTE!

NEWS

Harris County Voters Will Be Able To Cast Ballots At Any Polling Location On Election Day

The Texas Secretary of State has authorized Harris County to implement the Countywide Polling Place Program.

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Questions?

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