



June 22, 2012

The Honorable Daniel K. Akaka
United States Senate
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Akaka:

On behalf of AARP and over 38 million members, I thank you for your support of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's bipartisan Senate floor amendment #2156 that aimed to restore over \$4.5 billion dollars to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) under the Senate Farm Bill reauthorization bill (S. 3240 – The Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012). AARP regrets that the efforts of anti-hunger advocates around the nation and your affirmative vote did not prevail, and we remain troubled that SNAP is expected to bear approximately \$4 billion in so-called "savings." This means there will be less food dollars for hungry households to purchase food, especially seniors who disproportionately participate in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) where these cost savings would occur.

We applaud your courageous stance and want to assure you that AARP will continue to oppose efforts that seek to find cost savings that result in food insecure families having even less food on the table. AARP recognizes the difficult economic challenges the nation faces, and that burdens must be shouldered by broad segments of society, but we do not believe it appropriate to reduce already inadequate SNAP benefits (\$4.30 per person per day) to genuinely food insecure households. Most Americans would agree; polls published as recently as June 4, 2012 found that a total of 62% of respondents favor maintaining or increasing SNAP funding, while only 32% favored reductions. The passage of the amendment would have afforded a modicum of relief for those living close to or in hunger on a daily basis – many of whom are seniors – who sacrifice other critical living expenses just to eat.

AARP again thanks you for your compassionate stance in supporting this important anti-hunger amendment (# 2156) to improve the Senate Farm Bill (S.3240). Please feel free to contact me or call Ariel A. Gonzalez on the Federal Health and Family staff at (202) 434-3770 or at agonzalez@aarp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce A. Rogers".

Joyce A. Rogers
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs