



December 11, 2018

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of our 38 million members and older Americans across the nation, AARP is pleased to support the conference report accompanying the *Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018* (H.R. 2). The farm bill agreement would protect critical nutritional assistance for millions of Americans, including older Americans, and support healthy aging. We urge you to vote in favor of the adoption of the farm bill conference report.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps millions of Americans meet their basic nutritional needs. SNAP is especially important for older Americans because many live on fixed incomes and have limited financial resources to spend on basic necessities like food, housing and essential medicine. Furthermore, older Americans have a more difficult time finding employment after a period of unemployment. In 2016, 8.7 million SNAP households had at least one adult aged 50 or older. For many older adults, food security can mean better management of chronic diseases and make the difference in being able to age-in-place. SNAP participation is associated with reduced hospital and nursing home admissions among older adults, as well as overall reduced health care costs.

We are therefore pleased that the final agreement does not include expanded work requirements or other roadblocks to SNAP participation. The Agriculture Improvement Act would protect SNAP and increase employment and training opportunities for individuals on SNAP. The conference report also retains provisions supported by AARP such as the inclusion of the Broadband Connection for Rural Opportunities Program (B-CROP) that would allow older American households to use broadband to access telehealth and distance learning services, and enable aging-in-place; and the extension of the certification period for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) that would ease administrative burdens on states and older Americans. We are also pleased that the conference report does not include the expansion of association health plans (AHPs). AARP has long raised concerns with the lack of protections and benefits for consumers, especially those aged 50-64, under AHPs.

AARP urges you to support passage of the farm bill conference report. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me or Joyce Rogers, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs at 202-434-3750.

Sincerely,

Nancy A. Leamond

Executive Vice President and
Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer

Cc: Chairs and Ranking Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Senate Committee
on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry