



Islamic Society of North America
Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances
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Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances Policy on SNAP

As we fast from food and drink during Ramadan and reflect upon the deep meanings of this holy month, we are reminded that our intentional fasts are a privilege when so many of our fellow neighbors fast every day out of necessity. Millions of families are forced to choose between paying rent and electric bills or eating a meal or two each day. It doesn't have to be this way.

God reminds us in the Holy Qur'an in Surah An-Nisa ("The Women") (4:135):

"O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for God can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily God is well-acquainted with all that ye do."

In some versions of the Farm Bill, legislation calls for expanding work requirements that would narrow eligibility for parents, middle-aged SNAP recipients, and the disabled. Those who remain eligible would be saddled with complicated paperwork, and individual states will have to bear the cost of generating additional bureaucracy and job training programs. Substantive and effective job training is necessary for millions of Americans struggling to find reliable, good paying jobs. Workforce development provisions floated in some versions of the Farm Bill do not help people in poverty find sustainable work or stabilize their financial life; instead, they ensure hunger for far too many Americans. These are not the values this country is based upon.

SNAP has been incredibly impactful and lauded by both Republicans and Democrats as one of the most cost-effective and meaningful anti-poverty programs on the books. Ninety-two percent of SNAP recipients come from households with incomes at or below the poverty line, and in 2017 alone, SNAP lifted more than 3.5 million people out of poverty.

As people of faith, we urge Members in the House and Senate to reject any Farm Bill provisions that **expand** hunger and poverty. We implore Republicans and Democrats to work together to protect current levels of SNAP funding in the 2018 Farm Bill; remove barriers to food assistance for specific vulnerable populations, including seniors, Native Americans, students, and veterans; and ensure that additional and impractical work requirements stay out of legislation.

It is reported that the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him and his family, said, "He who fills his stomach, while the neighbor next door goes hungry, is not a believer." We are hopeful that Members of Congress will uphold the best of our country's values, and continue to provide basic necessities to those most in need, regardless of their employment situation.