December 2, 2019

We—the undersigned faith-based organizations representing various religious organizations, denominations, and faith traditions—are united in our commitment to reduce hunger and improve nutrition in the U.S. Our diverse traditions and holy scriptures instruct us to ensure that everyone may live with dignity and the opportunity to recognize their full potential. We join together to care for those who are poor and vulnerable, including nearly 40 million Americans facing hunger.

We have serious concerns about the Trump Administration's notice for proposed rulemaking to restrict state flexibility in setting Standard Utility Allowances (SUAs) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

USDA claims that the proposed changes would “replace the patchwork of outdated approaches states currently use when assessing household utilities,” however the impact will be increasing hunger and hardship in this country. If this rule change goes through, SNAP benefits will be cut by $4.5 billion over 5 years. An estimated 20% of SNAP households will see their benefits cut by $30 each month.

This new attack against SNAP is an attempt to circumvent congressional intent as laid out in the bipartisan 2018 Farm Bill reauthorization. Instead of rulemaking that jeopardizes food assistance for struggling Americans, USDA should focus on implementing the 2018 Farm Bill and strengthening critical nutrition assistance programs like SNAP.

Many of our organizations, congregations, and leaders work to feed, clothe, house, and serve our friends and neighbors who are struggling, but we know that we cannot do this work alone. More than 40 million American men, women, and children struggle to put food on the table on a regular basis. While charitable organizations play a vital role in addressing hunger, we know that the overwhelming majority of food assistance in this country has historically come from—and must continue to come from—federal programs. Simply put: the charitable food sector is in no way equipped to respond to the scope of food insecurity in America.

Our values and traditions compel us to honor the dignity of every person, especially those who are struggling. No matter a person’s circumstance, no one deserves to be hungry.

Signed,

Bread for the World
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
Church World Service
The Disciples Center for Public Witness
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscans for Justice
Friends Committee on National Legislation
ICNA Relief USA
The Jewish Federations of North America
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
Poligon Education Fund
Presbyterian Church USA
Rabbinical Assembly
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Assembly
Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross USA Province
Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities
Society of Friends (Quaker)
Sojourners
T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ)
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Women of Reform Judaism