

MAZON™ NEWS

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LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

For more than 30 years, MAZON has been fighting for systemic change and refusing to accept that anyone in the United States or Israel should struggle with hunger. We believe in a bold vision: that hunger can be solved in our lifetime. Hunger in America is the result of policies and practices, not a shortage of food, and it can be fixed—but only if we have the political will to end it. Since our founding, we have dedicated ourselves to cultivating that will through focused, tireless work on behalf of those who struggle with hunger. In recent years, we have made it a priority to speak up for those whose hunger is so often ignored—including currently-serving military families, veterans, seniors, Native Americans, and college students. We see our policy work as a vital “moral multiplier,” that we can be—and can do—better together than we might manage as individuals.

As we reflect back on our recent work, we are heartened by many markers of success: we saw the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, which protected SNAP for nearly 40 million Americans and their families; we cultivated new and important partnerships with organizations in some of the most food insecure states; we elevated the issue of hunger among college students in America; we made great strides on important pieces of legislation; and we strengthened relationships with policymakers who share our deep concern about the pervasive—and absolutely solvable—problem of hunger.

During the Farm Bill reauthorization process alone, we held over 140 meetings with congressional offices to advocate directly for protection of SNAP, led and sponsored rapid-response, state-based actions in 18 states, delivered a letter signed by nearly 1000 members of the Jewish clergy to Members of Congress, and authored and were quoted in 20 news articles in major media outlets nationwide.

Our efforts have been heard at the highest levels: Congressman Jim McGovern (MA-02), Chairman of the House Rules Committee and longtime champion of anti-hunger issues, said of MAZON’s unwavering advocacy on the Farm Bill: “I want to thank all of you for all the great work that you’ve done to protect SNAP and to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our country. I’m a big fan of MAZON, and we’ve worked for many years together, and the reason why we have a Farm Bill that doesn’t decimate SNAP is in large part due to the work that your organization has done.”

But our work is far from over. Even as we celebrate these victories, new threats to SNAP and to those who struggle with hunger emerge almost daily. Through it all, MAZON has harnessed the power of our community to fight on behalf of the most vulnerable among us. We will not cease in this work until we see an end to this injustice. We will keep ever vigilant, agile, and responsive to the challenges that emerge because we know, in our hearts, that an end is in sight.

And together, we *will* transform how it is, into **how it should be**.

L’shalom,

Liz Kanter Groskind

Liz Kanter Groskind
BOARD CHAIR



Abby J. Leibman

Abby J. Leibman
PRESIDENT & CEO



#FreedomFromHunger

Elevating the Issue of Veteran Hunger

MAZON believes that those who have fought for our freedom should never have to struggle with hunger. Unfortunately, the painful reality is that nearly 1.4 million veterans need SNAP to keep food on the table, and too many other veterans struggle with hunger but don't get the assistance they need.

This past November, in honor of Veterans Day, MAZON released #FreedomFromHunger, a campaign to raise awareness about the unacceptable problem of hunger among America's veterans.



Veterans are particularly impacted when harmful changes and cuts are made to vital government programs like SNAP. Between attempts to add onerous work requirements to SNAP, or take flexibility away from states to provide

assistance in areas where the economy is still recovering, veterans and other Americans who struggle could lose access to life-saving nutrition—exacerbating the problem of hunger, not reducing it.

MAZON works to address the issue of veteran hunger by removing barriers to accessing life-saving benefits. As we raise awareness with the public and policy



leaders in partnership with veterans and military service organizations, we have the privilege of working directly with the VA and USDA to better connect veterans to available resources. As a result of MAZON's advocacy and partnership, for the first time, the Department of Veterans Affairs began food insecurity screenings. Over 3 million veterans have already been screened—the first step towards accessing vital nutrition benefits.

To learn more about the #FreedomFromHunger campaign and watch the video, visit mazon.org/veterans.

This important work is funded by MAZON's dedicated and engaged supporters, who sent powerful messages to Congress along with their participation in the campaign.

Messages from the MAZON Community

No American should go to bed hungry, neither adult nor child. Those who dedicated their lives to protecting our country deserve better. – Rabbi Schicker, Michigan

Thank you, MAZON, for this opportunity to give Tzedakah on behalf of those who have served our country in the Armed Forces. As an American and an Army veteran, it is inconceivable to me that there is food insecurity for the family of a person who serves in the U.S. military. Keep fighting until this wrong is corrected. No American should fear going hungry. – Bruce, Virginia

Veterans and soldiers, and their families, deserve to have nutritious food available. Our country owes them a debt of gratitude. – Yvette, Ohio

The members of Temple Beth Israel support our veterans and those on active duty and thank them for their service. We hope that our elected leaders will take the appropriate steps to ensure that all of our military personnel can soon enjoy freedom from hunger. – Temple Beth Israel, Illinois



Hungry in College: Food Insecurity on American Campuses

MAZON Hosts Capitol Hill Briefing Featuring the First-Ever National Report on Extent of College Hunger

On January 9, 2019, there was a major victory in our fight against college hunger when the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report on this issue, marking the first time that a federal agency published data highlighting the extent of food insecurity among college students. The report was the result of MAZON's advocacy in demanding a review of the scope of college hunger, and was requested by Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee Ranking Member Patty Murray, Senate Agriculture Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow, Senator Elizabeth Warren, and Senator Ed Markey.



The report found that 39 percent of all undergraduates—almost 7.3 million students—are at risk of hunger. Even more shocking, the GAO also reported that in 2016, almost 2 million at-risk students did not receive SNAP benefits for which they were eligible.

To coincide with the GAO report release, MAZON co-hosted a special briefing 'Hungry in College: Food Insecurity on American Campuses' on Capitol Hill to present the report findings and discuss approaches to improving students' access to SNAP. MAZON convened leading researchers, policy analysts, state officials, university administrators, and students to offer an in-depth conversation on key findings in the report and how states and colleges can respond to the growing epidemic.

The panelists highlighted the complicated eligibility rules that act as barriers for students to access SNAP benefits, the misconceptions of who is a traditional college student, and the compounding factors of tuition, living expenses, and housing costs that have exacerbated the issue of hunger on campuses.

Now that the federal government has acknowledged that a significant percentage of college students are at risk of food insecurity and are not accessing SNAP, it's time to take action.



Kathryn Larin, Government Accountability Office; **Samuel M. Chu**, National Synagogue Organizer for MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger; **Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab**, Professor of Higher Education Policy & Sociology, Temple University & Founder, Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice; **Dr. Pam Eddinger**, President, Bunker Hill Community College; **Honorable Teresa D. Miller**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; **Yesenia Jimenez**, Emerson National Hunger Fellow '18; **Carrie Welton**, Policy Analyst, Center for Law and Social Policy

MAZON knows that broad-based policy solutions are the most efficient and essential tool to fight hunger, and we are committed to working with USDA's office of Food and Nutrition Service and campuses nationwide to identify, pursue, and implement solutions so that all students can succeed. For more information, contact Samuel Chu, National Synagogue Organizer, at schu@mazon.org.

Forging Ahead

Despite Successful Farm Bill Passage, New Threats Emerge for SNAP

FARM BILL UPDATE



After years of steadfast advocacy to protect SNAP in the 2018 Farm Bill, MAZON was heartened to see the bill signed into law in December. The final Farm Bill maintained and strengthened the existing funding and structure for SNAP and avoided the harsh and punitive work requirements originally proposed in the House of Representatives' version. However, within days of the bill's passage, we learned of a new potential threat: a proposed rule change through USDA to restrict states' flexibility to issue waivers for SNAP's time limits. We at MAZON knew that the fight to protect SNAP was far from over.

In January 2019, the 116th Congress convened amidst a contentious and unprecedented 35-day government shutdown. During the shutdown, thousands of federal workers and contractors turned to the charitable food sector to meet their basic needs. Despite dozens of food pantries springing up across the country, too many of these hard-working Americans still could not put food on the table. MAZON has long understood that the charitable food sector is not equipped to respond to the scope of food insecurity in America—the shutdown was an alarming reminder of the critical need for SNAP.

Almost immediately after the government reopened, we faced confirmation of the new attack on SNAP. On February 1, the Trump administration formally proposed the rule change through USDA that would prevent a state from waiving the harsh three-month time limit on SNAP for those looking for work. This proposed rule change would result in more than 750,000 people losing access to life-saving nutrition

Perhaps most alarming was the shutdown's impact on **Indian Country and implications for USDA's Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)**. Over half of all tribes in the country participate in FDPIR, which serves 90,000 households with a monthly food box of commodity items selected by USDA. With no contingency plan in place for this vital nutrition assistance program, Native American individuals and families across Indian Country reported devastating hardship and widespread fear of hunger due to the pointless government shutdown.

benefits. MAZON's experience tells us that this proposal ignores the realities of people who work inconsistent hours, lack access to transportation, live in areas where the economy has been slow to recover, or are unable to access employment and training programs—all of whom could fail to meet the harsh time limits imposed on SNAP recipients. We are deeply concerned that this rule change proposal would severely impact veterans who often face unique challenges in securing full-time work, and may require more than three months to find employment.

This new attack on SNAP is a ploy to circumvent the bipartisan congressional decision in the Farm Bill, and could not be more out of touch with the realities of struggling American families. Stripping SNAP benefits from people who struggle to feed themselves is no way to encourage them to find work—it will only make them hungrier.

LGBT Senior Hunger Summit

MAZON's Inaugural Summit Highlights the Issue of Hunger Among LGBT Seniors



In October 2018, MAZON convened leaders from anti-hunger, LGBT, aging, and economic justice organizations to discuss an often-overlooked challenge facing LGBT older Americans: that of hunger. In partnership with SAGE Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders, MAZON brought together nearly 50 key stakeholders to share insights, exchange ideas and strategies, and discuss policy solutions to tackle this issue. Board Member Rabbi Joel Pitkowsky opened the program with a discussion of one of MAZON's core values—*b'tselem Elohim*: "We are all made in God's image." He shared the importance of a Jewish organization speaking out about LGBT issues and gave an overview of MAZON's work in the LGBT senior space.

While there is widespread understanding that LGBT seniors are facing challenges in healthcare and housing, the third "H" of basic needs—hunger—has been overlooked for far too long. That's why MAZON is working in partnership with those in the LGBT community to best advocate on behalf of this particularly vulnerable—but highly resilient—population.

We know that LGBT seniors are 60% more likely to experience food insecurity than their non-LGBT peers, and addressing the unique challenges facing LGBT older Americans is critical as this population grows. LGBT elders are also less likely to seek out meal programs and other charitable food programs out of fear of anti-LGBT discrimination and harassment.

There remains a dearth of data available on this population, which is why MAZON has commissioned

LGBT seniors are 60% more likely to experience food insecurity than their non-LGBT peers.



a robust qualitative study from the renowned Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law—one of the nation's most prominent LGBT policy think tanks—to explore how LGBT seniors experience food insecurity. Additionally, there are efforts underway to advocate for anti-discrimination policies on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression for USDA programs like SNAP, the senior-only Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Considering that LGBT elders face higher rates of social isolation, poverty, and a lack of access to culturally competent services, not enough attention has yet been paid to the hunger LGBT older people disproportionately face on a daily basis. MAZON has worked for several years to elevate this issue, and our inaugural LGBT Senior Hunger Summit jumpstarted a critical national dialogue on how we can better advocate on behalf of this community and determine lasting, effective policy solutions. *For more information, contact Joe Goldman, Senior Policy Associate, at jgoldman@mazon.org.*

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Meet Stacy Harris, Whose Longtime Support of MAZON is Rooted in Family Tradition

Stacy Harris of Nashville, Tennessee, has been a dedicated donor to MAZON for 24 years. Stacy has always found it important to give back to make the world a better, more equitable place. She has been engaged in social justice for as long as she can remember; growing up, her mother's favorite charity was MAZON.

"I saw through my mother the good work MAZON was doing," says Stacy. Once her parents passed away, she knew that it was her turn to get more involved in MAZON's work. Stacy has cared about hunger for a long time, but in particular, she is moved by MAZON's mission to work on behalf of all those who struggle—of

all faiths and backgrounds. She believes there should be "no questions asked," no religious litmus test in order for people to receive access to assistance; in Stacy's words, we must all simply "do good to do good."

When it comes to supporting MAZON, she is proud to know that her donations are truly making a difference. In order to ensure her gift is making the most impact, Stacy tries to make her gift during one of MAZON's matching campaigns. She's also taken the meaningful step of including MAZON in her estate planning, and hopes others will join her in doing so. "It's a gift that will survive you," Stacy says. "A gift that keeps on giving."

Hunger Bites

SMALL PLATES **BIG CHANGE**

Join MAZON for a special event! On Wednesday, June 5, 2019, MAZON will host **Hunger Bites: Small Plates, Big Change** at Playa Studios in Culver City. Hunger Bites will showcase some of Southern California's top chefs and restaurants. For more information, please contact Naama Haviv at nhaviv@mazon.org or (424) 208-7210.



GIVE A GIFT TODAY

During Passover, we say 'Let all who are hungry, come and eat.' Your support helps us make this call a reality on behalf of all those who are hungry in our midst.

Give a gift today by using the attached envelope, visiting amazon.org, or by calling us at (800) 813-0557.

Thank you for your generous support!

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mazon.org

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR!

Help us fight on behalf of hungry families.
Please call us at (800) 813-0557
to join our monthly giving program today!

LEGACY GIVING AND GIFT PLANNING

Find out about life-income gifts, giving through your will, and other creative ways to support MAZON. Please contact Amy Smith at asmith@mazon.org or by phone at (424) 208-7226.

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WHO IS MAZON?

Inspired by Jewish values and ideals, MAZON is a national advocacy organization working to end hunger among people of all faiths and backgrounds in the United States and Israel.

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