URGENT ACTION ALERT

DATE: September 19, 2013
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, NAACP Washington Bureau

Stop Cruel, Extremist Cuts To Food Assistance Programs For Children And Families

H.R. 3102 WOULD CUT FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS BY $40 BILLION OVER 10 YEARS; STOP OVER 6 MILLION NEEDY AMERICANS, INCLUDING CHILDREN, VETERANS, SENIORS, LOW-INCOME WORKERS AND THE DISABLED FROM GETTING LIFE SAVING FOOD ASSISTANCE

THE ISSUE:

Later today, Thursday, September 19, the U.S. House of Representatives is scheduled to consider H.R. 3102, the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013, which would reduce spending on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or “SNAP” (formerly known as Food Stamps) by $40 billion over the next 10 years. If this bill were to become law, more than 6 million Americans, including children, veterans, seniors, low-income workers and the disabled would lose their access to the SNAP program; for many, the only source of food they may have. Almost 48 million people in 23 million U.S. households currently rely on SNAP; they receive an average of $133 in food assistance each month, which is only approximately $4.43 per day.

Given that more than 46 million Americans – 16 million of them children – are living in poverty and more than 11 million Americans are currently unemployed, it seems counterproductive and almost cruel to take away such a crucial amount of assistance without guaranteeing worker training or job location assistance to struggling Americans. Furthermore, at last count more than 50 million Americans, or 1 in 6, faced hunger at some point last year. The situation is especially dire among African Americans: in 2011, more than one in four (25.1%) African American households were officially “food insecure.”

H.R. 3102 further punishes people by also including a provision to deny people convicted of a host of certain crimes from ever receiving SNAP food assistance (after they have served their sentences and regardless of how long they have been out of prison or jail) and it requires intrusive drug testing for all beneficiaries – regardless of their age (even children) or lack of any previous record of drug use. These provisions are not only in direct contrast to the spirit of rehabilitation and, in some cases, may even inspire recidivism. It also subjects many innocent Americans to privacy intrusions.

In a country as wealthy as ours, and with so many available resources, it is ironic and frankly inhumane that so many people go hungry every night. We can and should be doing more to curb this problem, not exacerbating these conditions by taking away the safety nets that currently exist for those people who find themselves without.
THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:
Contact your Representative NOW and URGE THEM TO OPPOSE H.R. 3102, EXTREMIST CUTS TO SNAP. To contact your Representative, you may:

✓ Make a Phone Call:
  Call your your Representative in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Representative’s office. The switchboard phone number is (202) 224-3121 (see message section, below).

Write a Letter
  To write a letter to your Representative, send it to:
  
  The Honorable (name of Representative)
  U.S. House of Representatives
  Washington, D.C.  20515

Send a Fax
  If you would like to send a fax, call your Representative’s office (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for his or her fax number (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

Send an E-Mail
  To send an e-mail to your Representative, go to www.house.gov, and click on “Write Your Representative” (on the left hand side, just under “find your Representative). This will help you identify who your congressman is and how to contact him/her.

No time to write a letter! Call, fax or e-mail today!

THE MESSAGE

• If enacted, H.R. 3102, the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013, a misguided, mean spirited, immoral, and frankly callous, piece of legislation would rip the safety net out from beneath millions of Americans, including children, veterans, seniors, low-income workers, and the disabled.

• Almost 48 million people in 23 million U.S. households currently rely on SNAP; they receive an average of $133 in food stamps each month, which is only approximately $4.43 per day.

• More than 46 million Americans – 16 million of them children – are living in poverty and more than 11 million Americans are currently unemployed. Furthermore, at last count more than 50 million Americans, or 1 in 6, faced hunger at some point last year. The situation is especially dire among African Americans: in 2011, more than one in four (25.1%) African American households were officially “food insecure.”

• H.R. 3102 further punishes people by also including a provision to deny people convicted on a host of crimes from ever receiving SNAP benefits (regardless of how long they have been out of prison or jail) and it requires drug testing for all beneficiaries – regardless of their age or lack of any previous record of drug use. These provisions are in direct contrast to the spirit of rehabilitation and, in some cases, may even inspire recidivism.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!
If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

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To become an NAACP member or to sign up for e-mail legislative and press updates, visit www.naacp.org
The Honorable ___________________________
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.  20515

RE: STRONG OPPOSITION TO H.R. 3102, LEGISLATION MAKING EXTREMIST, CRUEL CUTS TO FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Dear Representative ______________________________:

As your constituent, I am writing to express my strong and unflinching opposition to H.R. 3102, the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013. If enacted, this misguided, mean spirited, immoral, and frankly callous, legislation would rip the safety net out from beneath millions of Americans, including children, veterans, seniors, low-income workers, and the disabled.

H.R. 3102 amends the eligibility requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps. Under the proposed terms of H.R. 3102, the federal government would cut spending on SNAP by approximately $40 billion over the next ten years which would eliminate service to as many as 6 million Americans. Almost 48 million people in 23 million U.S. households currently rely on SNAP; they receive an average of $133 in food stamps each month, which is only approximately $4.43 per day.

Given that more than 46 million Americans – 16 million of them children – are living in poverty and more than 11 million Americans are currently unemployed, it seems counterproductive and almost cruel to take away such a meager amount of assistance without guaranteeing worker training or job location assistance to struggling Americans. Furthermore, at last count more than 50 million Americans, or 1 in 6, faced hunger at some point last year. The situation is especially dire among African Americans: in 2011, more than one in four (25.1%) African American households were officially “food insecure.”

In a country as wealthy as ours, and with so many available resources, it is ironic and frankly inhumane that so many people go hungry every night. We can and should be doing more to curb this problem, not exacerbating these conditions by taking away the safety nets that currently exist for those people who find themselves without.

Thank you in advance for your attention to my position; I look forward to working with you to try to find a viable, permanent, solution to the problem of hunger in America which does not cause more pain or needlessly punish those less fortunate among us.

Sincerely,
(sign and print your name and remember to include your address)