

## **National Legislative Update May 2018**

### **Farm Bill: Provisions on SNAP Eligibility:**

#### Overview:

There are several specific items unique to food retailers in the Farm Bill, and our industry has had several successes in that language, we also need to know about those provisions that directly impact clients and their eligibility. Currently, there are around 42 million people receiving SNAP benefits. The work requirements under the bill would change as the general work requirement would apply to all people 18-59 who would be required to work 20 hours per week or enroll in work training. There would be a two-year transition for states.

The bill would result in the reinstatement of an asset test for recipients (none exists in most states now)—and while people with low assets could still qualify for SNAP, they would have to complete the application paperwork, that is likely to cut the caseloads.

On gross income, currently, states that choose the Broad-based categorical eligibility option (BBCE) can look at applicants' other expenses for basics like shelter and child care to see if their net income is at or below 100% of poverty. This option would be eliminated under the bill text.

Several states currently participate in a program that provides eligibility for SNAP if the client receives \$20 or more in LIHEAP (Low Income Heating Assistance Program) payments. This provision will be eliminated, potentially resulting in reduced participation in those states.

The current states with ABAWD waivers are linked below and the current counties and cities in Labor Surplus Areas are also linked. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) numbers are expected soon which should provide a clearer picture of the number of households expected to be impacted. (See current status below for additional detail and more information)

#### **Current Status:**

Last week, the House Agriculture Committee passed Chairman Conaway's farm bill reauthorization on a party-line vote of 26-20. The day-long markup debate focused primarily on the changes to SNAP, particularly on changes to eligibility and work requirements. There were only a few amendments offered on the bill and none to Title IV, which includes SNAP. The bill does include a few of our industries reauthorization priorities, including a prohibition on state EBT contractors from charging retailers a transaction or gateway fee.

Additionally, the bill includes important nondisclosure/privacy protections for SNAP retailers and customers. However, the bill does include language that industry representatives are working with the committee to improve. They have shared their concerns on the bill's mobile payments language and national gateway language. The

grocery industry will continue to work with the committee to improve the bill before it goes to the House floor. Chairman Conaway has indicated he would like to take the bill to the full House for consideration in the next few weeks. We are anticipating that additional amendments including a manager's amendment will be offered on the House floor.

**Off Interest:**

Sec. Perdue Testifies Before House Agriculture Appropriations Committee on FY19 Budget:  
USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue [testified](#) last week before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture regarding the President's 2019 budget request. Among other topics, he outlined the vision around the USDA food box or "Harvest Box" proposal. In response to a question about the "Harvest Box" from Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY), he indicated that he developed this idea following a food bank tour. Secretary Perdue offered to discuss his thoughts on this subject more fully.

Coalition for Accurate Product Labels Launches Website:

The Coalition for Accurate Product Labels launched a website and Twitter feed this week. The Coalition is working to address the patchwork of inconsistent state-mandated labels and disclosure requirements on a range of consumer products. Linked here are the website: <https://www accuratelabels.com/> and coalition Twitter ([@accuratelabels](#)).