# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture
1305 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Peterson:

As the House Committee on Agriculture prepares its reconciliation package, we urge the Committee to resist changes to current law that would cut benefits provided by federal nutrition programs.

The Food Stamp Program is the cornerstone of federal nutrition programs, and serves as the first line of defense in the national battle against hunger. Food stamps provide an important safety net to the most vulnerable people in our communities. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, 36 million people in the United States, including 13.3 million children, were living in households that experienced food insecurity. Roughly 88 percent of these households have gross incomes below the poverty line; 38 percent of these households have gross incomes at or below half of the poverty line.

In the weeks since Hurricane Katrina, the number of individuals in need of food stamps has exploded, and is only expected to increase as the rebuilding efforts continue. Now is not the time to turn our backs on the millions left poor, homeless and hungry by this natural disaster. Cuts to the Food Stamp Program would cripple its ability to meet the basic human needs of these displaced persons. Food banks, private charities and local communities, even the most generous, are not equipped to cope with hunger on such a grand scale.

We understand that the Committee has difficult decisions to make as it works to reduce mandatory spending. However, we strongly urge the Committee to keep any cuts to federal food programs as close to zero as possible and oppose changes in eligibility requirements that would jeopardize the integrity and character of these assistance programs.

We would like to thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Bernard Sanders
Member of Congress

James McGovern
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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