



# Preparing for Pushback

Your member of Congress and his or her staff are not expecting to meet with a policy expert today. They are meeting with you, their constituent, because they care about your concerns. If they ask any questions you can't answer, tell them a policy analyst with Bread for the World will follow up with any additional information or clarification they need.

**Please remember to make any such notation on your Congressional Visit Report Form.**

You should, however, anticipate some questions or comments as you make your views known on Capitol Hill. The following potential points of disagreement will help you prepare for your lobby visits.

## 1. **There are hungry people in the United States. Why should we spend taxpayer dollars on strengthening food and agriculture systems abroad?**

- Globally, nearly 815 million people are hungry, and malnutrition causes approximately half of all deaths of children under age 5 (about 3 million children) each year. Hunger and malnutrition prevent millions of people in developing countries from living healthy, productive lives and stunt the mental and physical development of future generations.
- Investments in improving food security and nutrition, such as those through Feed the Future, can also contribute to peace and security in vulnerable countries. Hunger is a contributing factor to conflict and cycles of crisis; a fed and well-nourished world is a more secure world. Additionally, initiatives like Feed the Future build economic prosperity by driving growth, and promote U.S. moral leadership around the world.

## 2. **Why do we need to pass the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act now?**

- Feed the Future, which was authorized through the Global Food Security Act (GFSA) approved in 2016, has enabled significant progress against hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in its focus countries. But the current global context, with prolonged conflicts and famines, a changing climate, and deepening inequalities, has stalled or even reversed progress in vulnerable areas around the world.
- Feed the Future supports countries in developing food systems that, from production to consumption, ensure nutritious foods are available, accessible, affordable, utilized, and contribute to overall economic growth. By continuing its global leadership through the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act, the United States will continue to contribute to the remarkable progress achieved in reducing hunger and malnutrition worldwide.
- Initiatives like Feed the Future are beginning to yield positive results, but this initiative needs to be reauthorized if we are going to ensure this comprehensive, whole-of-government strategy will continue, and if we hope to see long-term, positive results.

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### 3. **Has there been any success from the original Global Food Security Act (GFSA)?**

- Since GFSA was approved in 2016, the U.S. government, led by USAID, has strengthened interagency collaboration by developing a shared strategy to reduce global hunger and malnutrition. Thanks to congressional oversight of the Feed the Future plan, the legislation has also strengthened the accountability, implementation, evaluation, and effectiveness of food security and nutrition programs.
- In the 19 focus countries identified in the strategy, 9 million more people are living above the poverty line and 1.7 million additional households are not suffering from hunger. And 1.8 million more children are living free from the devastating effects of stunting.

### 4. **Benefit cuts and eligibility changes to SNAP in the farm bill are necessary “to maintain the integrity of the program.”**

- SNAP is already an effective and efficient program that reaches exactly whom it’s supposed to. The average SNAP household has a gross monthly income of \$813, well below the strict national income limits. Ninety-two percent of SNAP benefits go to households with incomes at or below the poverty line, which is \$25,100 for a family of four.
- Nearly two-thirds of all SNAP benefits go to the most vulnerable – children, elderly, or disabled people. In fact, roughly 1.5 million veterans live in households that participated in SNAP at some point during the past 12 months, and about 8 percent of all veterans received SNAP.

### 5. **Stricter work requirements in SNAP are necessary to get participants “back to work.”**

- SNAP already encourages work. Employment rates among households with children and at least one non-disabled adult rose nearly 10 percent from 2009 to 2015 during the Great Recession. Additionally, the majority of able-bodied adults who receive SNAP are already working or looking for work.
- The House Farm Bill would shift funding from food assistance to the administrative costs of job requirements and mandatory classes for people who lose assistance and cannot find work. The funding that the bill would provide for “job training” cannot possibly provide meaningful training for the millions of people who would be negatively affected by its stricter job requirements.

### 6. **Charitable and private responses to hunger are more efficient and caring than government programs.**

- Ending hunger and poverty requires strong partnerships between the federal government, state and local governments, and local communities. Churches and individuals through private charity alone cannot serve every person who is hungry.
- Including SNAP and child nutrition programs, the U.S. government provides 19 times more food assistance than private charity. Federal nutrition programs ensure that struggling families and individuals—regardless of what state they live in—have access to the food they need to thrive.