


REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: May 24, 2018

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No.18-0002-S65
Assignment No. 18-05-0494

SUBJECT: Resolution to oppose the 2018 farm bill

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Ryu-Price-Huizar-Martinez-Koretz) to include in the City's 2017-2018 Federal Legislative Program, OPPOSITION to H.R. 2, the 2018 farm bill which could cut benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

SUMMARY:

Resolution (Ryu-Price-Huizar-Martinez-Koretz), introduced May 22nd, 2018, advises that H.R. 2 failed to gain the bipartisan support among U.S. Representatives normally accorded to farm bills because of its threatened cuts to SNAP, including unreasonable work requirements. The Resolution further advises that these cuts would harm low-income communities across the country, including the roughly 800,000 Los Angeles residents living below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. The Resolution therefore requests that the City oppose H.R. 2, and any other farm bill that cuts funding to SNAP.

BACKGROUND:

Farm bills are omnibus legislation that authorize multi-year federal funding for various agriculture and food assistance programs. Such bills usually enjoy broad bipartisan support—the most recent farm bill, H.R. 2642, passed the U.S. House in 2014 by a 251-166 margin. This year's farm bill, H.R. 2, has failed to garner similar support. It passed the House Committee on Agriculture without a single Democratic vote, and failed a full House vote by a 198-213 margin.

One of the primary reasons of opposition to this farm bill is because of its proposed changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP, known in California as CalFresh, is a federally mandated, state-supervised and county-operated entitlement program that provides financial assistance to help low-income people purchase food. The Public Policy Institute of California estimates that 4.1 million Californians received CalFresh benefits each month during the 2017 Fiscal Year.

H.R. 2 proposes new requirements and restrictions for people looking to receive food assistance. Able-bodied adults between the ages of 18 and 59 would have to work at least 20 hours per week or be part of a job training program to be eligible for benefits, beginning in 2021. That minimum work requirement would be increased to 25 hours by 2026.

While proponents contend these restrictions would cut federal costs, prevent fraud and promote self-sufficiency among low-income people, the bill's opponents contend that any cost savings would be lost to the new bureaucracy and paperwork needed to monitor recipient's work status and job training. Furthermore, opponents estimate that the restrictions would push 2 million individuals out of the program nationwide.

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED:

None

BILL STATUS:

05/18/2018 Failed of passage/not agreed to in House: On passage Failed by the Yeas and Nays: 198 - 213 (Roll no. 205).

05/03/2018 Reported (Amended) by the Committee on Agriculture. H. Rept. 115-661.

04/18/2018 Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by the Yeas and Nays: 26 - 20. Action By: Committee on Agriculture

04/12/2018 Introduced in House



Chris Campbell

Analyst

Attachments: 1. Resolution (Ryu-Price-Huizar-Martinez-Koretz))

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the House version of this year's farm bill, H.R. 2, passed the U.S. House Agriculture Committee on solely Republican votes but subsequently failed on the House floor; and

WHEREAS, the bill failed to gain the bipartisan support normally accorded to farm bills because it threatened to gut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);

WHEREAS, SNAP, known in California as CalFresh, is a federally mandated, state-supervised, and county-operated government entitlement program that provides monthly food benefits to help low-income households purchase fresh, healthy food; and

WHEREAS, Congress continues to consider slashing SNAP benefits through unreasonable work requirements, among other restrictions; and

WHEREAS, these cuts would devastate disadvantaged communities across the country, including the 387,000 low-income Angelenos who may be eligible for CalFresh benefits, and the 800,000 Angelenos who live below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2017-2018 Federal Legislative Program opposition to any farm bill that cuts funding for SNAP.

PRESENTED BY: *David Ryu*
DAVID RYU
Councilmember, 4th District

PRESENTED BY: *Curren D. Price, Jr.*
CURREN D. PRICE, JR.
Councilmember, 9th District

PRESENTED BY: *Monica Rodriguez for Huizar*
JOSE HUIZAR
Councilmember, 14th District

PRESENTED BY: *Nury Martinez*
NURY MARTINEZ
Councilmember, 6th District

PRESENTED BY: *Paul Koretz*
PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY: *Steph Kemp*

cc

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