



UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON
**AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
& FORESTRY**

U.S. SENATOR DEBBIE STABENOW, CHAIRWOMAN

PRESS RELEASE

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It's Time To Get Real

The only path to passing a bipartisan Farm Bill is holding together the broad farm and food coalition that has formed the foundation of every successful bill for decades. However, recent attempts to fracture that coalition through misleading statistics and an inaccurate portrayal of how the Farm Bill works has stalled progress on negotiations and risks forcing an extension of the 2018 Farm Bill at the end of the 118th Congress.

Stop The Politics Around SNAP

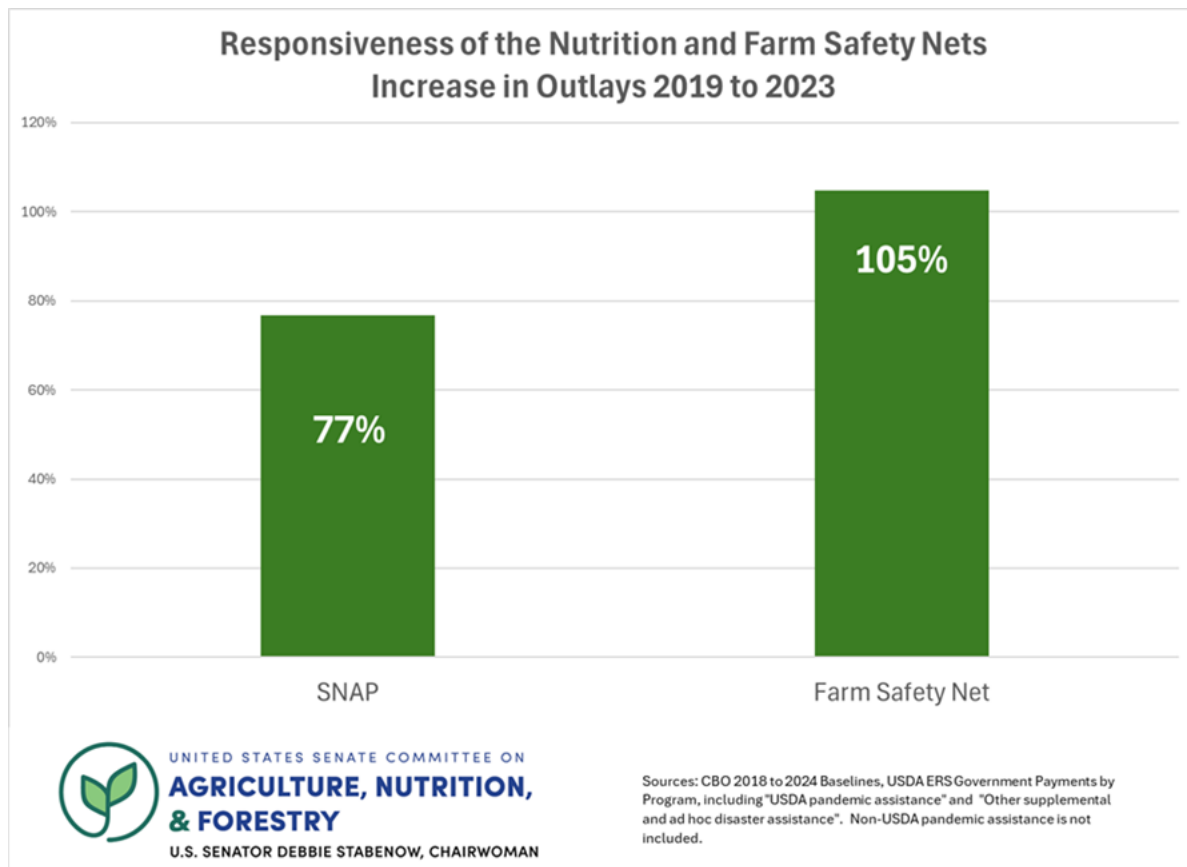
The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is designed to respond to fluctuations in the economy, and recent figures from USDA show that **nutrition spending decreased by 13% since fiscal year 2022**. This shows that the programs are working as intended – similar to how the Title I commodity programs decrease when crop prices and farm income are high.

Year-to-year changes in SNAP spending **do not** take away funding for other Farm Bill programs. Similarly, year-to-year changes in spending for crop insurance and commodity programs during disasters or economic downturns do not take funding away from SNAP.

Republicans are breaking the farm and food coalition by falsely claiming that increased program cost for food security through SNAP has somehow taken resources away from farms or left farms out of the mix. Such a framing is disingenuous and misleading.

Looking at what has actually been spent on SNAP since 2018, the majority of the recent increase to SNAP is a result of COVID payments, increased rates of those in need, and rising food costs, **not the Thrifty Food Plan update.**

If we look at what has actually been spent on SNAP benefits and on the farm safety net relative to the CBO forecasts in 2018, we see an important and accurate story.



While both have increased, increases in spending on the farm safety net surpassed those for SNAP and **far exceed the misleading 12% figure that is often cited by Republicans.**

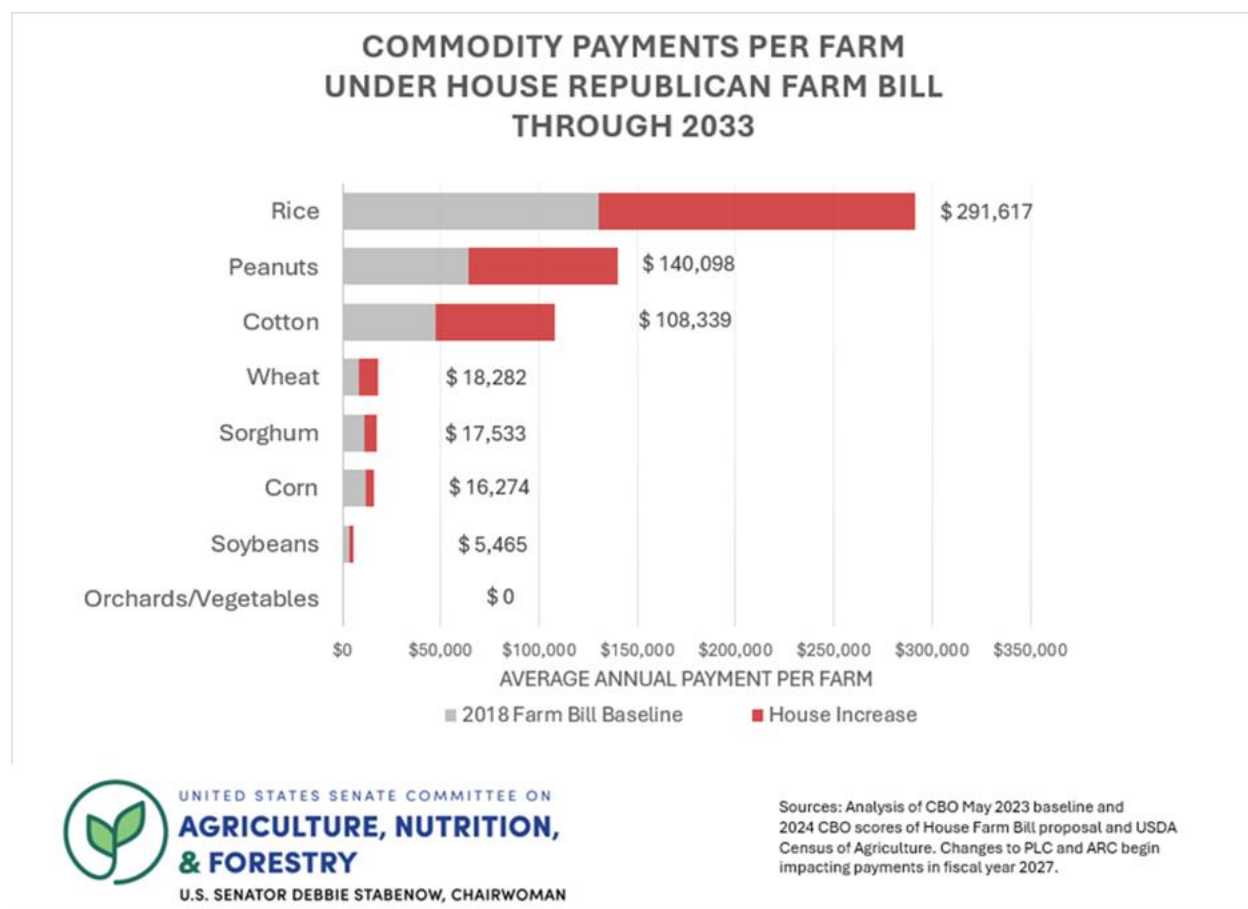
Over the past five years, through congressional and administrative action, SNAP spending increased without taking any money from other programs. SNAP program funding is driven by the amount of people in need, so the program grows during economic challenges and shrinks as the economy improves and fewer people need food assistance. Over the same period, we also invested in the farm safety net to respond to multiple unprecedented

disasters. We made those investments without taking from nutrition or conservation.

Looking forward, we should do the same as we have historically done in order to achieve a bipartisan farm bill. We can invest in a balanced way without cutting from one program to pay for another.

More Farm in the Farm Bill for the Few

The false argument that spending on SNAP has taken resources from the farm safety net has led to calls for “more farm in the Farm Bill.” However, even here, the reality of what has been proposed does not reflect the rhetoric. **House Republicans have proposed more “farm” in the Farm Bill, but only for the few – concentrating on landowners with a history of growing row crops and within those just a handful of mainly southern crops.**



The House Republican bill picks the biggest winners and losers between crops and regions and further skews an already skewed system. It pours taxpayer resources into southern commodities while leaving northern crops with relative pennies. It boosts the average annual payment per farm to over \$100,000 for rice, peanuts, and cotton, while other crops like wheat, soybeans, and corn are left with less than 1/5th of that increase. *And to add insult to injury, it adds to the deficit because it is not paid for within the Farm Bill.*

Even within each crop, the payments are concentrated in the largest farms. Under the House Republican bill, 50% of ARC and PLC payments would flow to just 40,000 of the nearly 2 million farms in our country, resulting in a \$22 billion increase in taxpayer funded subsidies to those farms over the next 10 years.

Both the farm and food safety net are important. However, blatant and disingenuous attempts to pit one against the other in an attempt to boost taxpayer funded payments to only a handful of crops is not a pathway to success.

Senate Democrats build on the success of the bipartisan 2018 Farm Bill by making meaningful improvements to the traditional commodity programs while understanding that the farm safety net is much more than just ARC and PLC. The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act expands crop insurance and markets, and supports specialty crops, dairy, and other critical commodity programs. It funds research, increases food access for families, supports rural communities, and builds the next generation of agriculture professionals.

It's time to get real. It's time to pass a Farm Bill.