

## Advocacy Update 2.14.2019



### NTFB VOICE Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS

## **FEDERAL**

### **A Federal Funding Deal is ALMOST here....Hopefully!**

A compromise has been reached to fund the federal government in order to keep it open for the remainder of the year.

The deal isn't closed just yet, so we are contacting our Members of Congress to encourage them to work together to keep the government open. Even then, the deal is only final if President Trump signs the spending package compromise. Stay tuned.

In this deal, within the US Department of Agriculture's budget, food banks are grateful to see an increase of \$30M dollars for The Emergency Food Assistance Program, Storage and Distribution costs. These funds will help food banks cover the costs incurred from distribution increases due to the trade mitigation food deliveries and the demand increase due to the government shutdown.

### **Trade Mitigation Funds**

\$7.1 Billion of the \$9.6 Billion in trade relief funds has been paid out to farmers. The application window for farmers seeking aid ends today. Will it all get used?

### **Green New Deal...what is that?**

A resolution, S. Res. 59 (116), requests that the U.S. economy move away from fossil fuels, boost wages and expand union rights. The plan is not necessarily about policy restrictions or proposals but rather a way for the United States to set goals for slowing down climate

change.

The deal seeks to "work collaboratively with farmers and ranchers ... to remove pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector as much as is technologically feasible." Specific goals include additional support for sustainable and family farming, healthier soil and a "more sustainable food system."

An unreleased report from the Environmental Protection Agency shows that greenhouse gases increased in 2017 largely due to increased factory farming practice, or overproduction of livestock to meet or create demands for animal proteins.

This controversial resolution is being viewed as either an aggressive step forward demanding change or an act of sentiment without teeth. [I'll let you decide.](#) [Report.](#)

## **STATE**

### **State Lobby Day is Near!**

The wheels on our bus are ready to go round and round. On February 19th, a delegation of partner agencies, community partners, board members, and NTFB staff members will be headed to Austin to speak with our State Representatives and State Senators about how to combat hunger in North Texas. We are excited to share this day with our fellow food banks in Texas. Please follow along on our social media channels to see what we are up to during the day as we advocate for a healthy, hunger-free North Texas. Please contact me if you have any questions.

### **SNAP Photo ID Bills are Back**

A Senate Companion to HB 1250 (Phelan) was filed by State Senator Brian Creighton - SB 671. This bill would require SNAP EBT cards to have a photo printed upon the card of the card user.

Here are a few reasons why we are not currently supporting that legislation.

1. SNAP is issued to a household, not a person.
2. It's expensive. The legislative budget board estimates the cost at about \$13M a year for printing and \$11M a year to implement.
3. Under federal law, SNAP recipients are protected by a non-discrimination clause. If debit/credit card users are not asked to show their ID, a retailer cannot ask a SNAP recipient for their ID either.
4. Self-Check Out lines. SNAP EBT cards may be used at self-check out lines. Retailers would have to implement ID check processes without singling out SNAP benefit shoppers against other shoppers; a possibly impossible, definitely expensive and discriminatory process.
5. Our retail grocers and partners are not the "welfare police" and have no authorization or requirement to comply with identification checks.
6. SNAP has the lowest fraud rate of any federal program, hovering between 1-2%, most of which is on the administrative end.
7. Putting photos on cards is unnecessary and creates more problems than it solves.
8. Children often shop for their working or disabled parents or grandparents using the EBT card and the benefits are required to be accessible to all members of a household.

I'll see you on the other side of State Lobby Day. Again, please follow along on the North Texas Food Bank Instagram Account and on Twitter at both @NTFB and @NTFBVoice.

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Questions or Comments? Send them here!

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