




REPORT CARD

United States Senate
 Assignment: 2018 Farm Bill
 Name: Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018
 Topic Area: Food Access, Nutrition, and Public Health

FBLE Recommendation	Rating	Comments
 <p>Protect and Strengthen the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as our Nation's Most Vital and Successful Nutrition Assistance Program</p>		FBLE provides recommendations for improving food security, food access, nutrition, and public health outcomes through the farm bill. Although S. 3042 does not take major steps forward, it avoids cuts to SNAP and makes small technological improvements.
Maintain SNAP's current structure and ability to adapt to changes in economic conditions.		S. 3042 preserves existing eligibility requirements for the SNAP , avoiding misguided efforts to take benefits away from low-income families who cannot find work.
Expand SNAP to address food insecurity and revitalize local economies.		S. 3042 does not expand SNAP . It does maintain the program's current benefit levels, does not impose additional work requirements , and includes new pilot programs to help more SNAP-eligible persons access training and employment opportunities.
Improve SNAP access and efficiency through technology.		S. 3042 directs USDA to allow Farmers Markets to improve SNAP access using electronic benefits transfer (EBT).
Remove ineffective barriers to food access that impose a high administrative burden.		S. 3042 tests the cost effectiveness of new tools to verify household income. But, the bill could go further in improving access by eliminating time limits for able-bodied adults without dependents.
 <p>Improve Public Health and Increase Access to Healthy, Nutritious Foods, Especially for Vulnerable Populations and Rural Communities</p>		The farm bill provides opportunities to strengthen healthy food consumption, especially among vulnerable populations. The Senate bill seizes many of these opportunities with important steps forward.
Strengthen food assistance programs that promote healthy choices among SNAP participants.		S. 3042 reauthorizes and increases funding for the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program , with \$50 million per year in mandatory permanent baseline funding. The bill also funds the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) at the continued level of \$20.6 million per year.
Identify and scale successful SNAP-Education programs.		S. 3042 maintains the Nutrition Education State Plan. This misses opportunities to improve education around healthy eating and nutrition. FBLE would have liked to see steps to evaluate and highlight successful education program(s) that could be emulated in other locations.
Improve rural public health.		S. 3042 follows the FBLE recommendation to maintain rural broadband loan and grant programs that enable rural communities access to telemedicine services. Further, the bill includes a minimum broadband service speed for projects and also authorizes a host of funding and technical assistance options to support broadband initiatives.
Improve health outcomes of low-income individuals living with serious diseases by establishing a Food is Medicine pilot.		S. 3042 creates the Harvesting Health Pilot Projects including a Produce Prescription Pilot, which prescribes fresh fruits and vegetables to improve health. FBLE supports this project but would have liked to see language about a medically tailored meal program and more focus on evaluation.

 = Aligns with FBLE recommendations | Updated to reflect S. 3042 as it passed in the Senate on 6/28/18