



Working together toward a hunger-free and healthier community.

Mid-Ohio Foodbank

Farm Bill Town Hall Insights

Thank you to Jonathan McCracken, Senior Policy Advisor to Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, for leading an amazing discussion Tuesday at a roundtable conversation on the 2018 Farm Bill. Sen. Brown and Jonathan are traveling Ohio, taking part in over 30 discussions on this legislation, including yesterday's event at Mid-Ohio Foodbank.

The biggest takeaways from the session:

1. The U.S. Senate is committed to a bipartisan approach on the Farm Bill, following a more traditional pathway for this critical legislation. This allows for belief that we will see a more balanced Farm Bill that better supports anti-hunger efforts rather than punishing those needing assistance.
2. There is possibility of a Farm Bill not being passed this year, which would necessitate current Farm Bill provisions being extended, possibly into 2019 (a better scenario than enacting HR2, the House version of the Farm Bill).
3. Finally, as the discussion highlighted, there is need for general education on SNAP and other assistance programs – it was obvious there are continuing misconceptions on how assistance programs work and in regard to demographical portraits of those utilizing these programs.

Perhaps most impressive from the discussion was the wide array of interests in attendance, as several non-food bank groups participated. It was a great example of how hunger fits into larger poverty discussions and the need for a holistic approach to solutions.

We greatly appreciated everyone's attendance and participation and especially having Jonathan facilitate the town hall. Few can match Jonathan's knowledge on the Farm Bill and the programs it supports and we are fortunate that he was willing to take the time for this town hall and to share his insights.

What's Next for Farm Bill?

The U.S. House has indicated they are targeting late in the week of June 18 for a second vote on the bill. Although the bill was defeated in a floor vote, U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan changed his vote in favor of the bill to against it, which allows him to bring HR2 back up for a revote. Two items to note:

1. Prior to the bill's defeat, several amendments were adopted, the majority of which furthered cuts to SNAP. With that in mind, any reconsideration of HR2 by the House is likely to follow this trend – do not look for any softening of this legislation while it is under consideration in the House Chamber.
2. The Senate has started their deliberations of the Farm Bill and their initial version of the bill is expected to be unveiled soon. As noted in the roundtable discussion, the Senate version is expected to be more favorable for anti-hunger programs.

Advocacy needs to continue in both chambers; reiterating to the House opposition to HR2 due to its devastating provisions slashing funding and making untenable structural changes for SNAP. Meanwhile, efforts in the Senate need to begin. For talking points and information on the Farm Bill, visit the [Feeding America](#) and the [Food Research and Action Center](#) (FRAC) advocacy sites.

As always, feel free to contact your Mid-Ohio Foodbank advocacy team at advocacy@midohiofoodbank.org; or, advocacy team members directly at Tim White, Advocacy Manager: (614) 317-9480 or white@midohiofoodbank.org; or, Marilyn Tomasi, Vice President, Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs at (614) 317-9446 or mtomasi@midohiofoodbank.org.

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