

## **FRAC WEEKLY NEWS DIGEST**

**Issue #31, August 8, 2016**

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### **Quote of the Week**

"[T]here are several provisions that concern me in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation. Instead of reducing hunger and food insecurity, this bill instead makes it harder for effective community programs to serve our most vulnerable populations."

[Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson](#) (D-TX), North Dallas Gazette, August 4, 2016



### **Strengthening Safety Net Programs**

[Stopping the Contagion of the TANF Disease](#) – PovertyLaw.org, July 2016

"The change in 1996 from AFDC to TANF was just one particularly harmful shift in a decades-long series of changes in wages, workplace benefits, and public income supports – a series that inflicted great hardship," writes FRAC President Jim Weill in this essay, part of a series of essays on the 20th anniversary of the 1996 welfare reform law signing. Weill calls for boosting wages, employment rates and benefits as well as "a system of adequate public income supports for those who are unemployed or are unable to work or cannot find work." The federal government also has a vital role, as it alone has the capacity to confront "the toxic mix of economic stagnation for the bottom half, persistent poverty, declining opportunity, and...economic insecurity."



### **Child Nutrition Reauthorization**

[No School Lunches: Food for Thought in the Summertime](#) – North Dallas Gazette, August 4, 2016

"Congress is deciding the fate of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation," writes Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), in this op-ed, and "there are several provisions that concern me[.]" Johnson notes that the bill in the House "does not properly invest in programs like the Summer Meals Program," and instead "makes it harder for effective community programs to serve our most vulnerable populations."



### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

[The Injustice Of Lifetime Food Stamp Bans](#) – The Huffington Post, July 29, 2016

Georgia recently became the most recent state to lift the lifetime ban on SNAP participation

for people convicted of a felony drug crime; people with drug convictions can begin receiving benefits if they are compliant with parole and drug treatment conditions. Still, five states (Arkansas, Mississippi, South Carolina, West Virginia, Wyoming) continue the lifetime ban. Research shows that people who have served time for drug felonies have a higher prevalence of food insecurity.



[State partially lifts ban on drug felons applying for food stamps](#) – Alaska Public Media, July 28, 2016

Individuals who have served time for drug felonies in Alaska and comply with parole and drug treatment requirements can now receive SNAP benefits. Senate Bill 91 – the state’s criminal justice bill – was recently signed, lifting the federally-imposed lifetime ban (part of the War on Drugs passed by Congress during the Clinton administration) on SNAP for people with drug felonies. “People who are coming out of incarceration are often some of the most vulnerable people,” said Cara Durr of the Food Bank of Alaska. “And if we’re withholding food assistance from them, it’s not helping them [get back on their feet].” The Food Bank will help these people provide the necessary proof that will enable them to receive SNAP.



[Healthful Foods Could Be Just a Click Away: FNS Works to Bring Online Shopping to SNAP Purchases](#) – USDA Blog, August 2, 2016

The 2014 Farm Bill called for USDA to investigate the use of SNAP benefits for online grocery shopping, which could improve program participant access to healthy food, especially for those living in food deserts. USDA plans to call for volunteer retailers this fall who are interested in participating in demonstration projects for online purchasing. Challenges to implementing online purchasing include the need for SNAP purchases to conform to a higher level of security than most other online purchases, and the need for an online purchase system to work with individual state systems for SNAP EBT payments.



[Federal report calls for better tracking of military food needs](#) – San Diego Union Tribune, August 2, 2016

Military service members used more than \$21 million in SNAP benefits in commissaries between September 2014 and August 2015, and Congress funded, until 2015, additional food assistance for military families. Now, a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report is calling for more data on food needs for military families. “Without more complete survey data, DOD [Department of Defense] will not understand the prevalence of need among service members to effectively target its support and determine if it should assign department-level responsibility for monitoring food assistance needs,” notes the GAO report.



## School Breakfast

[Students discover fruits and vegetables](#) – Desert Dispatch, July 30, 2016

During the 2015-16 school year, 74 percent of students in California’s Barstow School District qualified for free or reduced-price school lunch, a three percent increase from the previous school year. However, school breakfast participation has only been 20 percent. FRAC has reported that research shows that students who skip breakfast suffer academically, and hungry students exhibit behavioral, emotional and academic problems. To increase school breakfast participation, the Barstow school district will begin offering free breakfast to all students.



## Seniors and Nutrition

[New Nutrition Facts Label: What's in It for Older Adults?](#) – AARP Blog, July 29, 2016

Recently, FDA announced new Nutrition Facts labeling rules that go into effect by July 2018. In this blog post, AARP highlights the changes and describes how the improvements will affect older adults. For example, serving size information will be in larger type and bolded, which could increase readability for seniors, who experience declining eyesight. Also, older adults are often deficient in vitamin D and potassium, and the new labels present information on these nutrients.



## Minimum Wage

[High Minimum Wages Lead to Healthier Newborns, According to Two New Studies](#) – Slate, August 4, 2016

The National Bureau of Economic Research published a study, "Effects of the Minimum Wage on Health," that found a "small, significant and beneficial effect of a minimum wage increase on birth weight due to both a decrease in preterm birth...and increase in fetal growth." Higher wages also led to greater prenatal care. Another study, "The Effect of an Increased Minimum Wage on Infant Mortality and Birth Weight," published by the American Journal of Public Health, found "a dollar increase in the minimum wage above the federal level was associated with a 1 percent to 2 percent decrease in low birth weight births and a 4 percent decrease in postneonatal mortality."

