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## PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

For 50 years, UnidosUS (formerly the National Council of La Raza), the nation's largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization, has worked to increase opportunities for America's children and families, including the nation's 58 million Hispanics. This includes championing policies that give more people the tools they need to be healthy and economically secure, including access to healthy, affordable food. As a result, UnidosUS is deeply concerned about potential proposals to drastically cut and radically restructure the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

SNAP is a vital program for more than 40 million Americans, including 10 million low-income Latino children and families struggling to put food on the table. Not only does SNAP fill a critical gap when it comes to hunger, the program is an important poverty alleviating tool. In fact, in 2015, SNAP lifted at least 1.2 million Latinos out of poverty. Further, SNAP recipients who are able to work, do work, as a significant share of SNAP households report income and earnings. SNAP also stimulates national economic growth, as every dollar spent on the program yields \$1.80 of positive economic activity. As conversations regarding the future of SNAP take place, UnidosUS's concerns include the following:

- **Drastically cutting SNAP funding.** SNAP is our country's most important anti-hunger program, and **provides support for more than 40 million Americans.** Drastic cuts to SNAP funding could force states to reduce SNAP eligibility, reduce benefits, or both. This could ultimately result in higher levels of hunger and poverty, worsened health, and other negative outcomes. On average, Latino families who participate in SNAP receive \$297 in benefits each month. This is often not enough, and cuts to SNAP would only make it harder for families to put food on the table.
- **Fundamentally restructuring SNAP.** Fundamentally structuring SNAP would potentially cause the most vulnerable in our communities to lose access to affordable foods. Unlike block grants, the current structure allows for SNAP to be able to immediately respond to increased need, economic downturns, or natural disasters, like we saw in our communities in Texas and Florida. Replacing SNAP with block grants would greatly undermine the purpose and role of safety net programs such as SNAP.
- **Erecting barriers to participation.** SNAP currently serves millions of Latino families each year, many of whom are low-income working families. Any push to institute broad work requirements or force states to time-limit food assistance, would be detrimental to our community, given that the majority of those who can work, already do so. Added requirements will only create barriers to participation for our community which is already at an increased risk of nonparticipation in SNAP.

Critical safety net programs like SNAP allow millions of hardworking Americans, including Latinos, to put food on the table, as well as be more economically secure. UnidosUS looks forward to working with you to maintain and strengthen SNAP so that it works for as many children and families as possible.