



The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) urges Congress to pass a Farm Bill reauthorization that promotes: food for hungry neighbors at home and abroad, healthy rural and farming communities, inclusion of people of all backgrounds, and creation care to feed future generations.

WE ADVOCATE A FARM BILL THAT PROMOTES: FOOD FOR HUNGRY NEIGHBORS AT HOME AND ABROAD

Protect and enhance the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); promote global and child nutrition through robust funding of U.S. international food aid initiatives; and facilitate food aid reaching people in crisis as efficiently and flexibly as possible.

HEALTHY RURAL AND FARMING COMMUNITIES

Support farmers facing vulnerability to climate change; protect farmworkers and other food chain workers from both unjust and hazardous working conditions and vulnerability to disaster-related work fluctuations; and support initiatives to address mental health among farmers, farm workers and all those in rural communities.

INCLUSION OF PEOPLE OF ALL BACKGROUNDS

Ensure fairness for small farmers, family farmers and local food economies; include people of all backgrounds in the benefits of farm bill programs, especially historically marginalized communities such as Indigenous peoples and Black farmers; and improve opportunities for new and young farmers to participate in the agricultural economy.

CREATION CARE TO FEED FUTURE GENERATIONS

Prioritize policies that encourage the transition to a sustainable agricultural system; promote conservation and protection of local and regional watersheds, forests and other ecosystems; and help reduce food waste throughout the food supply chain.

Like other Christians in the United States and around the world, we recite the Lord's Prayer, asking God to "give us this day our daily bread." We understand "daily bread" to mean not only what nourishes our bodies but also the people, processes and natural resources required to meet our basic human needs each day. This idea comes from Martin Luther, whose teachings are carried forward in the ELCA. Just as we ask God to feed us, we ask you to support policy that helps all to be fed.

MORE INFORMATION

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The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with 3 million members in more than 8,700 worshiping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands.," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world.

We heard from hundreds of Lutherans across the country who asked that their voices reach policy makers in the farm bill reauthorization process. Members brought their vocational, ministerial and civic experiences from varied parts of this country to ELCA listening sessions. They emphasized their deep concern for neighbors at home and abroad — especially the most vulnerable — and for faithful stewardship of God’s good creation.

FOOD FOR HUNGRY NEIGHBORS AT HOME AND ABROAD

- Reject any additional conditions or cuts to SNAP that would have harmful effects on recipients, such as additional burdensome work reporting requirements.
- Transition Puerto Rico’s Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) to SNAP.
- Eliminate prohibitions and other restrictions on SNAP aid for formerly incarcerated people, lawfully present immigrants and those who cannot meet work requirements for reasons such as caretaking.
- Fully fund priority international accounts including the Food for Peace Program (Title II), the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program, the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Program, Farmer-to-Farmer, and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET).
- Prioritize international initiatives that support local and regional procurement of food.
- Increase flexibility and efficiency in administration of international food aid programs.

HEALTHY RURAL AND FARMING COMMUNITIES

- Assist farmers who lose their livelihoods due to climate-related causes such as extreme heat, hurricanes and flooding; and expand crop insurance to support farmers who may be affected by the negative impacts of climate change.
- Encourage labor and workplace safety within U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) contracting, support a farmworker and food chain worker post within the USDA to improve interagency coordination, and expand access to emergency disaster grants to organizations assisting low-income migrants and seasonal farmworkers.
- Support more research on the impact of heat stress, housing quality, and pesticide use on the health of farmworkers.

INCLUSION OF PEOPLE OF ALL BACKGROUNDS

- Ensure that farm bill programs and policy do not disadvantage smaller-scale producers relative to the largest market actors.
- Invest in SNAP access on tribal lands and support ability of tribal nations and individual Native food producers to advance their food sovereignty, production and security initiatives.
- Respect the rights of and ensure equal opportunities for Black, Latino and women farmers.
- Increase incentives for small-scale, sustainable and/or regenerative farming.
- Improve access to farmland, credit, markets and technical assistance for young, beginning and minority farmers.

CREATION CARE TO FEED FUTURE GENERATIONS

- Increase funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).
- Expand incentives for farmers to adopt climate mitigation and adaptation practices, and protect the \$20 billion in funding that was allocated for climate-friendly agriculture and farm bill conservation programs through the Inflation Reduction Act.
- Incentivize farmers to increase and preserve the biodiversity on their land through practices such as sustainable agroforestry, and subsidize farmers interested in adopting practices such as regenerative agriculture at existing farms.
- Reduce food waste by promoting food recovery and donation at the farm level.

Thank you for reviewing these priorities and moving forward to deliver them in the Farm Bill. Our Lutheran community respects our elected leaders and holds you regularly in prayer.