



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## State Senator Gustavo Rivera and State Senator Liz Krueger Host Roundtable on the Impact of SNAP Cuts

GUSTAVO RIVERA November 20, 2013

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**(New York, NY)** – State Senator Gustavo Rivera and State Senator Liz Krueger were joined yesterday by colleagues and advocates to discuss the impact of cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on New York State residents and businesses.

As of November 1, SNAP benefits were cut by \$19 million a month in New York alone, leaving two million New Yorkers with less money to purchase food each month. Furthermore, Congressional Republicans are proposing an additional \$40 billion in cuts over the next decade to the SNAP program as part of the Farm Bill that is currently being negotiated.

In addition to exacerbating the hunger crisis in New York State, these cuts will also have a crippling effect on our State's economy. It is estimated that New York City alone will lose more than \$225 million a year in food purchases that support jobs in our retail food sector, our farming industry and throughout our State's economy, according to the Food Bank of New York City.

These cuts affect the most vulnerable at a time when New Yorkers continues to struggle with a recovering economy. State Senators and advocates joined together yesterday to explore the actions New York State can take to support its residents and alleviate the strain the cuts will cause on both New York residents and businesses,

"It is irresponsible and unacceptable for Congress to make cuts to the SNAP program, especially with so many working families and low-income New Yorkers still struggling during our country's economic recovery," said **State Senator Gustavo Rivera**. "The proposed funding reductions to SNAP will leave the most vulnerable among us struggling to put food on the table. With no steps or precautions to counter the devastating consequences of such cuts to either our residents or

our economy, we cannot stand by and allow Congress to continue to make decisions that will drastically diminish the quality of life of millions of New Yorkers. I would like to personally thank Senator Krueger and the advocates that joined us in an effort to find a way for our State to take action to counter the impact of these devastating cuts.”

"The federal cuts to the food stamp program translate into 20.6 million fewer meals for the 3.19 million New Yorkers receiving these benefits," said **State Senator Liz Krueger**. "This is our single most successful direct benefit program, and slashing it will literally take food off the table for families struggling in a tough economy, while simultaneously doing real harm to the economy, taking dollars out of every link in the chain from farm to table. It's crucial that those of us at the state and local level put our heads together at meetings like the one organized by Sen. Rivera and try to forge a path toward state action to counteract the damage the federal government is doing to our communities with these cuts."

“SNAP cuts are the quintessential lose-lose policy. They increase hunger and they destroy jobs. They are immoral and defy common sense,” said **Joel Berg, Executive Director, New York City Coalition Against Hunger**. “We thank Senator Rivera and his colleagues for standing up against this insanity.”

“City Harvest has been seeing an increase in the lines at our Mobile Markets and we are surveying our network of soup kitchens and food pantries to respond to the increased demand for emergency food. While we are committed to increasing the amount of food we deliver, charity just cannot make up for the significant cuts to SNAP,” said **Kate MacKenzie, Director, Policy and Government Relations**.

“The SNAP cuts that went into effect on November 1<sup>st</sup> will take away 76 million meals in our city over the next 12 months – that’s more meals than Food Bank For New York City, the largest food bank in the country, distributes annually,” said **Triada Stampas, Senior Director of Government Relations at Food Bank For New York City**. “We look forward to working with our State legislators to advance policies to mitigate the effects of these cuts and bolster our emergency food supply, the last line of defense against hunger for 1.4 million New York City residents.”

"These cuts could have debilitating economic implications on New York’s grocers." said **Angel Nunez, Vice President, National Supermarket Association**. “Significant reductions to the SNAP program could likely cause local grocers to have to make tough choices to avoid financial hardship, such as having to layoff personnel or reduce the inventory they offer their customers.”

## Roundtable Results: Proposed Actions For New York State:

- €€ Accept federal waivers and allowances that would curtail different work requirements or decreases in cash flow due to SNAP changes.
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- € Funnel more money into emergency food pantries to compensate for SNAP program changes.
- Increase state funding for the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program in order to supplement for SNAP reductions.
- Change administrative processes and regulations in city and state agencies to be more effective.