

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact

Dan D'Ippolito

207-775-0026 x1116

communications@preblestreet.org



**Ahead of Veterans Day, Preble Street Urges Congress to Honor
Veterans and Their Service by Protecting Food Assistance**

***The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program helps nearly 1.4 million low-income
veterans, including an estimated 9,000 veterans in Maine***

PORTLAND, ME (Thursday, November 8, 2018) — As the nation observes Veterans Day, Americans will come together to honor veterans and pay respect for their service. Beyond the ceremonies, parades, and speeches, however, exists a grim reality that thousands of veterans don't have the food, housing, and healthcare services they need.

Congress owes those men and women who served this country a debt of gratitude, including support for a Farm Bill that protects and strengthens the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which according to [a report released today from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) helps 1.4 million low-income veterans across the country put food on their tables, including an estimated 9,000 veterans in Maine.

Veterans often face unique barriers as they resume or rebuild their civilian lives and start new careers, and young male veterans have higher unemployment rates than civilians, making it hard for them to afford enough to eat.

SNAP is a tool for low-income veterans, who are struggling to find a job, working for low-wages, or have disabilities.

Formerly known as food stamps, it is one of the nation's best anti-poverty programs and is the most effective and efficient way to fight hunger. In Maine, **SNAP provides a lifeline for the one in seven households that don't have enough food.** With SNAP **180,000 Mainers** — including families with children, seniors, people with disabilities, and workers who are in between jobs or earning low wages — can get back on their feet and pay for groceries.

Preble Street Veteran Housing Services (VHS) assists Maine veterans and their families in all 16 counties in Maine to find and maintain stable housing and works to end homelessness among veterans, connecting veterans and their families to VA benefits and safety net programs including SNAP.

"Our lawmakers must be able to agree that, in the United States of America, no veteran or their family should go hungry," says Thomas Ptacek, VHS Veteran Peer Advocate. "That's why this Veterans Day we're calling on Congress to honor the people who have served our nation by passing a Farm Bill that protects and strengthens SNAP."

However, the program's future is currently under threat. The Farm Bill, which funds SNAP and other important nutrition assistance programs, expired on September 30 and must be reauthorized this year. Members of Congress are in negotiations to bring together House and Senate bills and agree on a final Farm Bill.

The strong, bipartisan Senate bill protects SNAP for veterans and others who are struggling and strengthens programs that can help veterans on SNAP get and keep a good-paying job. In contrast, the version of the bill passed by the U.S. House [would take food away from more than two million Americans, including many veterans.](#)

"The bipartisan Farm Bill passed by the Senate confirms what millions of people across the country know to be true: SNAP reduces hunger and poverty. Protecting and strengthening SNAP — not cutting it — is the right way forward," said Donna Yellen, Deputy Director of Preble Street. "We are grateful that Senators Susan Collins and Angus King voted for the Senate farm bill, and Representative Chellie Pingree opposed the House bill with its harmful cuts and changes."

"Now, we urge Maine's Congressional Delegation to pay due respect to Maine veterans and support all Mainers struggling with hunger by working with their colleagues to ensure that a final Farm Bill is based on the Senate's SNAP provisions."

Preble Street is a nonprofit human service agency serving the most vulnerable people in Maine since 1975 through innovative, best-practice, client-centered programs that respond to and prevent hunger and homelessness. In addition to the largest emergency food service program in northern New England, Preble Street operates 13 low-barrier programs throughout Maine providing 24/365 services for individuals and families living in poverty, including homeless youth, women, veterans, and victims of human trafficking, driven by its mission to meet urgent needs, empower people to move beyond the crises in their lives, and advocate for solutions to homelessness, hunger, and poverty. www.preblestreet.org

###