



## #RealCollege call to Congress to Halt the SNAP Student Work Requirement

*This statement should be attributed to Sara Goldrick-Rab and Carrie R. Welton  
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This week The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice joined over 200 other organizations to call on Congress to lift the work requirement in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for college students in upcoming COVID-19 legislation. The full letter, available [here](#), was sent to Senate leadership on July 27th.

Our call to lift the 20-hour per week work requirement is critical to reducing the food insecurity students were already facing before the pandemic, which has been compounded by increased unemployment and shifting requirements at their institutions. Before COVID-19 [our research showed](#) that students were struggling to meet their basic needs; the pandemic has exacerbated what was already a tenuous situation for some students and placed many more at risk.

New evidence from our latest [#RealCollege During the Pandemic survey](#), completed in the spring by more than 38,000 students, reveals that 44% of students at two-year institutions and 38% at four-year institutions experienced food insecurity due to the pandemic. Students were also impacted by record unemployment. The survey showed that two-thirds of students were experiencing job insecurity, with one-third having recently lost a job. As this crisis rages on, these challenges will likely grow.

College completion is critical for individuals, their families, and for the national economic recovery. People [without college degrees were harmed most](#) by the Great Recession. They did not experience the same recovery that college degree holders did and in many cases, they are now worse off. In an economy in which the vast majority of new jobs require some form of postsecondary credential, improving college student success will improve the likelihood that our nation can recover economically and do so faster.

[Increasing SNAP benefits](#) and removing barriers to access are proven means to increase utilization of a direct, effective, and efficient means of reducing food insecurity. Policymakers should not penalize students by withholding access to food during a time of adverse economic conditions for which they are not responsible. Given the extensive research that shows college improves a vast array of social and economic outcomes, lifting the work requirement to ensure students who are eligible for SNAP can access basic nutrition should be a priority for all policymakers.