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Food stamp denial for convicts the worst part of the 'farm bill'

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NCR Today

The "farm bill" is close to leaving both House and Senate committees and moving to the floor for votes. It's a five-year bill, and last year, the House failed to deal with it.

This year, the Senate bill cuts \$400 million a year in food stamps, and the House bill cuts \$2 billion a year. Both bills also cut some farm subsidies, but they both also increase crop insurance in a complex formula that may increase farm subsidies overall.

From my perspective, the worst part is a Senate amendment that would deny food stamps to people convicted of murder and sex offenses. People with felony drug convictions, including possession of small amounts of marijuana, are already banned from food stamps, but 40 states have opted out of that ban. This is a denial of second chances and a piling on of collateral consequences that severely impacts families. No matter what these men and women have done in the past, they are out on the street now. Employers deny them work as a matter of course. It is wrong, stupid and mean to deny them food as well.

Minnesota Public Radio has a full account of the food stamp bill. *The Washington Post* has a full account of the politics involved. The New Orleans *Times-Picayune* describes the amendment to ban food stamps for felons.

Sometimes, it seems like the best hope is for Congress to fail to act.

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