

FACT SHEET

Strengthening Local Food Security Act (S. 2338)

The Strengthening Local Food Security Act was introduced in the 119th Congress by Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Jim Justice (R-WV). This bipartisan legislation would establish a permanent program under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, enabling states, Tribal governments, and territories to purchase locally produced food for schools and hunger relief organizations.

By directing federal procurement toward small, beginning, veteran, and underserved farmers, the bill would leverage government purchasing power to strengthen local economies, build resilient regional food systems, and put fresh, nutritious food on tables across America.



Farm Action



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Background

The U.S. government is the largest purchaser of food, with federal food procurement representing billions of dollars in annual spending. However, contracts have overwhelmingly gone to the largest, most consolidated corporations. This system has shut out the vast majority of U.S. farmers and ranchers—especially small, beginning, and underserved producers.

By funneling government contracts to a few powerful players, federal procurement has reinforced consolidation in the food system, weakened regional food security, and left communities vulnerable to supply chain disruptions. Redirecting procurement dollars to independent producers would not only help rebuild resilient local and regional food systems, but also strengthen rural economies and expand access to fresh, healthy food.

THE STRENGTHENING LOCAL FOOD SECURITY ACT WOULD:

- Establish a permanent U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, modeled on USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA).
- Authorize cooperative agreements between USDA and state, Tribal, and territorial governments to purchase locally produced food.
- Ensure those purchases prioritize independent producers, including small, mid-sized, beginning, and veteran farmers.
- Distribute purchased food through hunger relief organizations and schools, ensuring it reaches families and children in need.
- Provide technical assistance to help producers meet requirements and participate effectively.
- Preserve state and Tribal flexibility to tailor purchases to local needs and contexts.



How Current Procurement Drives Consolidation

Federal food procurement programs have become a reliable revenue stream for the largest multinational agribusinesses. In 2022, Cargill received \$270 million in USDA food contracts and Tyson received \$248 million, including nearly half of all poultry purchases. With just 25 vendors accounting for nearly half of USDA's total purchases, smaller processors and independent farmers and ranchers are effectively locked out of access to these large, stable markets.

This pattern reinforces consolidation by strengthening the grip of a few corporate players who already dominate food processing and distribution while weakening competition and resilience in local food economies. As these corporations grow larger through guaranteed federal purchasing, independent producers are left with shrinking market opportunities, which accelerates the loss of family farms.

By contrast, directing procurement funds to smaller processors and independent farmers and ranchers would diversify supply chains, increase competition, and build food system resilience—all key to a healthier agricultural system.

Strengthening Local Food Systems and Meeting Needs

The Strengthening Local Food Security Act builds on lessons from USDA's LFPA program, which is now ending. The LFPA program invested nearly \$900 million and served thousands of producers and institutions by providing a stable, long-term funding structure. Drawing on LFPA's successes, this legislation would support food security in schools and underserved communities, while channeling dollars into local producers, reinforcing rural economies, and supply chain diversity.

Contact Caroline Nodus at cnodus@farmactionfund.us for more information.