

**Testimony by Resident Commissioner Pablo José Hernández**  
**House Agriculture Committee Member Day**  
**December 10, 2025**

I want to thank Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Craig, and the entire Committee for their time today and for the opportunity to discuss critical issues impacting Puerto Rico and the nation.

Puerto Rico faces several critical opportunities to strengthen its agricultural sector, rural economy, and overall resilience. Transitioning from NAP to SNAP, investing in core rural business and energy programs, supporting research facilities focused on tropical environments, and expanding housing programs will help secure a more sustainable and competitive future for Puerto Rico.

As many of you know, Puerto Rico is the only U.S. jurisdiction excluded from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, and instead receives a capped block grant under NAP. A family of three on average receives a maximum monthly benefit of \$315 under NAP as opposed to \$535 under SNAP. That structure also limits our ability to respond to disasters, economic shocks, and rising food costs. It keeps hundreds of thousands of families from receiving the same federal protections and benefits available in every state.

That is why earlier this year, I introduced the bipartisan Puerto Rico Nutrition Assistance Fairness Act, H.R. 5168, which finally puts Puerto Rico on the path to full SNAP participation. This is not just a policy change, it is about dignity, equity, and ensuring that families on the island are treated the same as families everywhere else in the United States.

I'm proud that this bill is gaining national momentum. It is endorsed by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, which recognizes the historic significance of achieving nutritional parity for our people. And it also has the support of Congressman Tony Gonzales, the Republican Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Conference. His support underscores that this is

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not a partisan issue, it is a fairness issue, and one that Republicans and Democrats can solve together.

Last Friday, I formally sent a letter to the Congressional Budget Office requesting a score for H.R. 5168. A CBO score is essential for advancing this legislation in the Farm Bill and other legislative vehicles, and I am committed to moving this forward as quickly as possible.

My message today is simple: Food insecurity is not a theoretical problem, it is a daily reality that affects children, seniors, people with disabilities, and working families. Congress has the power to fix this, and the blueprint is already written in H.R. 5168.

Thank you.