

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Pryor  
Chair, Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, FDA, & Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, FDA, & Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

May XX, 2013

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski, Ranking Member Shelby, Senator Pryor, and Senator Blunt:

As Congress works to craft its FY2014 Agriculture Appropriations bill, we strongly urge you to fully fund federal nutrition programs to meet current need. While there are signs of economic recovery, sustained high unemployment and underemployment mean that the need for food assistance remains high. Funding and strengthening the federal nutrition programs is necessary to ensure that vulnerable low-income families, children, and seniors continue to receive the nutrition assistance they need to protect them against hunger, combat obesity, and improve nutrition and health.

We are deeply concerned about the impact that the sequester and across the board discretionary spending cuts will have on the nutrition of vulnerable populations in Fiscal Year 2013. These cuts left the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) without adequate reserves to respond to unexpected increases in food prices and caseload. Additionally, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) will likely see a reduction in caseload, meaning that thousands of low-income seniors will lose monthly food assistance. Food banks will see a reduction in funding for the storage and distribution of commodities through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) at a time when the demand for emergency food assistance remains at historic levels. These disruptions to our discretionary nutrition programs are unnecessary and put our most vulnerable children, seniors, and families at greater risk of hunger and poor nutrition.

We urge you protect these programs from sequester and across the board cuts in FY2014 appropriations and to instead adopt the following funding levels and policy proposals:

#### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

*SNAP helps put food on the table for more than 47 million people each month. The average household has an income of less than 59% of the federal poverty guideline and 83% of all benefits go to households with a child, senior, or disabled person.*

- **Support SNAP as it continues** to respond to the increased need for food assistance with timely benefits and provide nutrition education and other program services. Provide **\$5 billion for the SNAP reserve fund**.
- **Restore the temporary increase in SNAP benefit levels** provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that was cut to help pay for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.
- **Suspend for one year the harsh time limits on SNAP benefits for certain unemployed able-bodied adults** without dependents.
- **Oppose harmful policy changes** that would restrict eligibility, reduce benefits or make structural changes that weaken SNAP's responsiveness.

### **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)**

*WIC serves low-income women and young children to age five, providing them with a nutritious monthly food package, nutrition education, healthcare and social service referrals to ensure that this at-risk population receives the quality nutrition and healthcare essential for healthy growth and development.*

- **Fully fund WIC at \$7.141 billion** to provide monthly nutritious food packages to a projected caseload of 8.9 million low-income women, infants, and children. Monitor WIC caseload and food cost inflation throughout the appropriations process to ensure that appropriated levels will meet anticipated needs.
- **Provide \$60 million for breastfeeding peer counselors** to improve breastfeeding initiation and duration, **\$30 million for Management Information Systems/Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)** funding to improve client access, retailer efficiency, and program integrity, and **\$14 million for infrastructure improvements.**
- **Provide at least \$50 million to replenish the WIC Contingency Fund**, which is expected to be depleted in FY2013 because of sequestration and rescissions.
- **Provide \$16 million for program initiatives and evaluation**, including \$5 million for research, and \$1 million to support program integrity efforts.

### **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)**

*TEFAP ensures a steady stream of nutritious USDA commodities for distribution through our nation's charitable food system, delivering some of the most nutrient-rich food that food banks distribute through pantries, shelters, and kitchens and providing support for storage and distribution.*

- **Provide \$268 million in TEFAP commodities** for distribution to low-income people through food banks, pantries, kitchens and shelters. Monitor food price inflation throughout the appropriations process to ensure the appropriated mandated TEFAP indexing adjustment is provided.
- **Provide the fully authorized funding level of \$100 million for TEFAP storage and distribution** of TEFAP commodities and **\$15 million for TEFAP infrastructure grants.**

### **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**

*CSFP provides a nutritious monthly food package to approximately 595,000 low-income participants, primarily low-income seniors. The CSFP food package is designed to meet the specific nutritional needs of the target population, combating the poor health conditions often found in food insecure seniors.*

- **Fund CSFP at \$202 million** to support a projected caseload of almost 600,000 participants.
- **Provide an additional \$5 million allow CSFP to serve the six additional states** with USDA approved state plans (CT, HI, ID, MD, MA, RI).

### **Child Nutrition Programs**

*Child nutrition programs serve children in school, day care, after school, and summer settings, providing them with nutritious meals and snacks that fuel them with the energy they need to thrive in the classroom and on the playground.*

- **Support and protect the integrity of the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Summer Food Service Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program** to provide children with nutritious meals and snacks.
- **Provide \$35 million for school meal grants** to help schools upgrade their kitchen equipment to serve healthier meals, improve food safety, and support access to the school breakfast program.

### **Other Nutrition Programs**

- **Provide \$20 million for WIC farmers' market** vouchers for low-income women, infants, and children.
- **Provide \$21 million for seniors farmers' market** vouchers for low-income seniors.
- **Provide \$3 million for the Congressional Hunger Center** for the operation of the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowships and the Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellowships. Hunger Fellows focus on developing solutions to hunger based upon their experience at field placements with local anti-hunger host organizations and their policy placements with national and international organizations.

- **Provide \$5 million for Hunger-Free Community Grants** to support innovation and coordination in local, public-private anti-hunger efforts.
- **Provide \$5 million for Community Food Projects** to support community-based solutions to food security by connecting local farmers with underserved populations.

#### **Nutrition Programs Funded through other Appropriations Subcommittees**

- **Provide \$439 million for senior congregate nutrition services** in the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.
- **Provide \$217 million for senior home-delivered nutrition services** in the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.
- **Provide \$35 million for Healthy Food Financing Initiative** in the Financial Services Appropriations bill.
- **Provide \$200 million for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program** in the Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

Together, hunger and obesity pose two of the greatest health challenges of our time, both the consequence of inadequate nutrition. About 50 million people live in households that struggle to put food on the table, placing millions of families at risk of hunger and poor nutrition. The long-term consequences are significant, both for individuals and our society as a whole. Food insecurity and poor nutrition reduce health and educational outcomes, decrease workforce productivity, and increase education and health care costs.

Coming at a time of record need and at a time when state and local programs have been slashed and the charitable system is stretched to the breaking point, robust federal support for nutrition assistance programs is more important than ever. We strongly urge you to fully support federal nutrition programs so they may continue to protect low-income Americans from hunger and improve access to nutritious, balanced diets for vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

Alliance to End Hunger  
 Bread for the World  
 Feeding America  
 First Focus Campaign for Children  
 Food Research and Action Center  
 Generations United  
 Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
 National Association of County and City Health Officials  
 National Council of Jewish Women  
 National WIC Association  
 Union for Reform Judaism  
 United Way Worldwide  
 Voices for America's Children