

WASHINGTON, DC (*June 21, 2012*) – Today Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and 7 members of the Illinois Congressional delegation sent a letter to House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas and Ranking Member Collin Peterson warning against cuts to federal nutrition programs during consideration of the 2012 Farm Bill, citing the impact on Illinois residents.

Over 1.8 million Illinoisans are food insecure - close to 745,000 of them are children. *Feeding Illinois*

food banks have seen a 73% increase in requests for emergency food assistance over the past three years. Studies show hunger increases health care costs, lowers workers' productivity, harms children's development, and diminishes children's educational performance.

"The Republican majority has repeatedly targeted cuts to programs that help low-income and middle-class American families, including anti-hunger initiatives," said **Rep. Schakowsky**. "The Ryan Budget would block grant the SNAP program, cutting \$122.5 billion from the program over the next decade. That means states would have to determine whether to cut benefits to levels below those that are required for a bare bones diet or put children and seniors who rely on the program on waiting lists. Our letter sends the clear message that SNAP, TEFAP, and CSFP are vital to our communities and our state. The people of Illinois deserve a Farm Bill that will maintain support for anti-hunger programs."

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) generates \$9 in local economic activity for every \$5 in new SNAP benefits. It also gets funds to those most in need, as more than three-quarters of SNAP households include a child, a senior, or an individual with a disability. Equally important is the fact that most beneficiaries are no longer enrolled in the program after nine months, meaning SNAP serves more as a trampoline than as a lifelong assistance program.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a means-tested federal program that provides food commodities for short-term hunger relief through organizations like food banks, pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters. Nutritious food commodities provided through TEFAP are an essential resource for those in need and allow food banks to combine commodities with private donations to maximize their efforts to prevent hunger.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) leverages government buying power to

provide nutritious food packages to vulnerable individuals, the majority of whom are senior citizens. While the cost to USDA to provide the food package is about \$20 per month, the average retail value is \$50, making it a highly efficient use of federal dollars.

“Charity alone cannot replace the safety net that SNAP, TEFAP, and CSFP provide,” Schakowsky said. “Fighting hunger is a moral, as well as an economic imperative and government must fulfill its role in reducing hunger in our state and across the country. The hardworking men and women in our districts who are struggling to make ends meet and put food on the table need those programs to be adequately funded.”

Along with Schakowsky, the letter was signed by Reps. Luis Gutierrez, Mike Quigley, Bobby Rush, Danny K. Davis, Jesse Jackson, Jr., Daniel Lipinski, and Jerry Costello.

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