

August 12, 2015

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National Commission on Hunger
c/o RTI International
3040 East Cornwallis Road
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Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194

Dear National Commission on Hunger:

As organizations committed to ending hunger in this country, we urge the National Commission on Hunger to address fully the causes and scope of domestic hunger and recommend effective policies to end it. Hunger in this country can be solved, and it can be solved through a bold and comprehensive plan. Indeed, given that the United Nations met its Millennium Development Goals of reducing the proportion of undernourished people in the world's developing regions by nearly half since 1990, there is no reason that we cannot eliminate hunger in the world's wealthiest country. We urge the Commission to seize this unprecedented opportunity.

The problem is urgent. Food insecurity is far too widespread and its harm is great. One in seven Americans – more than 49 million of us – lived in households struggling against hunger in 2013. Of this number, 15.8 million were children (21.4 percent of all children).

The negative consequences of food insecurity are well documented and devastating in the short and longer terms. Many compelling analyses, including those collected in the report that RTI International prepared for Congress and the Commission, demonstrate that all food insecurity harms physical and mental health, impedes educational outcomes, reduces opportunity, and undercuts productivity.

Solving hunger demands an aggressive approach that recognizes the pernicious and long-lasting impact of both “very low food security” and “low food security,” as well as the struggles and potential hunger of those the government calls “marginally food secure.” The test for the Commission's recommendations should be whether they are well-targeted to end hunger and sufficient to accomplish that vital goal. Such a comprehensive strategy must take into account the roles, responsibilities, and capacity of various sectors and approaches.

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First, hunger is an economic condition. Policies that promote a full employment economy with adequate wages and incomes can take the country a long way toward ending hunger. In addition to enhancing individual independence and dignity, such policies can make ending hunger a sustainable outcome.

Second, preserving the entitlement structure of and strengthening the federal nutrition safety net programs can complement economic, wage and income support policies to end hunger. SNAP, WIC, school meals, child care food programs, and out-of-school time nutrition programs are effective, mainstream ways of promoting food security for millions of people in need. Making SNAP benefits more adequate, connecting more eligible people with SNAP, WIC, school breakfast and lunch, child care meals, afterschool and summer food and other benefits, and improving coordination among programs will contribute to the success of an overall plan to end hunger.

Third, private sector – business, labor and charitable – efforts can bolster government’s leadership in alleviating hunger, but cannot take the place of government’s steadfast commitment, strong policies and adequate investments to end it.

The Commission has an unprecedented opportunity to make recommendations to end hunger in the United States. We urge you to meet that challenge with a bold and comprehensive plan that is commensurate with the task.

Sincerely,

AHEPA

Alabama Food Bank Association
Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance
Arrowhead Senior Center
Association of Arizona Food Banks
B. J. Jordan Child Care Programs
Baltimore Area Faces of Homelessness
Speakers' Bureau
Baltimore Outreach Services, Inc.
Bay Area Food Bank
Bean's Cafe
Blue Valley Community Action Partnership
CAFB
Cambridge Economic Opportunity
Committee, Inc.
Capital Area Food Bank of Austin
CDA
Center for Civil Justice
CFPA
Champlain Islands Foodshelf

Child and Family Policy Center
Child Care Food Program Roundtable
Children's Alliance
Citizens for Citizens, Inc.
Committee on Temporary Shelter
Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley
and Northeast Pennsylvania
Community Action Marin
Community Servings
D.C. Hunger Solutions
Day Care Connection
Duxbury Elf Food Shelf
El Paso Human Services, Inc.
Empire Justice Center
End Hunger CT!
Enosburg Food Shelf
Facing Hunger Food Bank
Fair Share
Faith in Action Northern Communities
Partnership, Inc.
Federation of Virginia Food Banks
Feeding Indiana's Hungry
Feeding Missouri
Feeding South Dakota
Feeding Texas
Florida Impact
Food Bank For New York City
Food Bank of Alaska
Food Bank of Central New York
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano
Food Bank of Delaware
Food Bank of the Golden Crescent
Food Research and Action Center
Franklin Grand Isle Community Action
GEDCO
Great Plains Food Bank
Greater Philadelphia Coalition
Against Hunger
Hardwick Area Food Pantry, Inc
Harvest Regional Food Bank
Hawaii Appleseed Center for
Law & Economic Justice
Hunger Advocacy Network
Hunger Free Colorado

Hunger Free Vermont
Hunger Solutions Minnesota
Hunger Solutions New York
Hunger Task Force
Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force
Illinois Hunger Coalition
Imperial Valley Food Bank
Kenai Peninsula Food Bank
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Kingdom Community Services
Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry
Long Island Cares, Inc.
Louisiana Food Bank Association
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Mercy Medical Center –
Mercy Supportive Housing Program
MLRI
Montana Food Security Council
N.C. Association of Food Banks
National Health Care for the
Homeless Council
Nebraska Appleseed
New Hampshire Food Bank
New Jersey Anti-Hunger Coalition
New York City Coalition
Against Hunger
Northeast Kingdom Neighbors
Helping Neighbors / RuralEdge
Northwest Harvest
Ohio Association of Foodbanks
Orange East Senior Center
Oregon Food Bank
Oxnard-Pathway to
Educated Nutrition, Inc.
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Point Roberts Food Bank
Poor Peoples United Fund
Preble Street Maine Hunger Initiative
Project Bread
Public Policy Center of Mississippi
Redwood Empire Food Bank
Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma

Rhode Island Community Food Bank
Roxbury Food Shelf
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Schenectady Inner City Ministry
Second Harvest Food Bank
of Middle TN
SF-Marin Food Bank
Single Stop
South Plains Food Bank
St. J Nutritional Center/
Meals on Wheels
St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance
Survivors, Inc.
Tennessee Justice Center
The Food Depot
The Greater Boston Food Bank
The Open Door
The Food Bank of
Western Massachusetts
Three Square Food Bank
Toledo Northwestern
Ohio Food Bank, Inc
Treasure Coast Food Bank
Turning Point
Umbrella, Inc.
United Ministries, Inc.
United Way of King County
Utahns Against Hunger
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Western Center on
Law and Poverty
Woodbury Calais Food Shelf
Woodstock Community Food Shelf
Worcester Food &
Active Living Policy Council
Worcester State University
Wu Yee Children's Services