

October 6, 2004

The Honorable Marion Berry
House Appropriations Committee
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Berry:

The Food Policy Working Group (FPWG) is a coalition of mostly faith-based and other community organizations deeply concerned that too many Americans experience hunger or constantly live on the edge of hunger. Especially daunting is the fact that nearly 35 million people in our country live in households that struggle to put food on the table. **Over a third (13 million) of these individuals are children.**

Concern for our neighbors, and especially the most vulnerable members of our society, is a pivotal part of our faith traditions. As expressions of our faiths, in FY05 appropriations we ask you to fully fund several important federal programs with proven track records in alleviating hunger.

Please provide sufficient funding to serve all eligible families that apply for The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) based on the most recent available data. In addition, please provide the \$125 million contingency fund included in the Senate bill and prohibit the authorization of new WIC-only stores as included in the Senate bill.

Food banks across the country report rising numbers of families – many with a working member – requesting food. Please allocate \$60 million to The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) for storage and distribution grants in FY05 so that \$140 million can be used for commodities.

To support the current level of participation in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, we urge you to accept the House funding level of approximately \$108 million, as well as the House language that would allocate about \$6.5 million worth of commodity inventory for this critical program.

Please support the Senate's level of funding in the amount of \$7.238 million for the Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP). Across the country, local organizations are using CFNP funds to link low-income families to nutrition programs, provide nutrition education, and much more.

Research across the Food and Nutrition Service programs is vital to ensuring that policy makers and the public have a thorough understanding of program impacts and opportunities to improve program operations. We recommend that you adopt the Senate level for research.

In addition, given the rise in food stamp participation and increased food prices, the Food Stamp Program will require additional resources in FY05. Please provide \$36,315,000,000, including the \$3 billion benefit reserve to ensure normal program operations.

Thank you for considering the importance of these programs and the enormous benefit that good nutrition plays in the long-term goals of promoting learning, creating a strong workforce, and protecting our nation.

For further information contact Kay Bengston, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Washington Office, 202/626-7942, Chair, or Julie Brewer, Bread for the World, 202/639-9401, Vice-chair.

Sincerely,

American Baptist Churches USA
American Friends Service Committee
America's Second Harvest
Bread for the World
Episcopal Church, USA
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Food Research and Action Center
Lutheran Services in America
NETWORK National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
National WIC Association
RESULTS
The Jewish Council for Public Affairs
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