

Tell Congress to Protect Food Stamps

July 22, 2005

Message: The FY 2006 Congressional Budget Resolution, which Congress approved earlier this year, instructs the House and Senate Agriculture Committees to design policies to cut \$3 billion over five years from programs under their jurisdiction by September 16, 2005.

There is concern that funding for the Food Stamp Program may be reduced as part of the \$3 billion of required cuts. Any reductions in funding, or changes in the structure of the Food Stamp Program, will be devastating for those in need of food assistance.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that, in 2003, over 11 percent of U.S. households were food insecure - meaning that at some time during the year, these households were uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources.

Contact your Senators and Representative and tell them not to reduce funding for the Food Stamp Program. Ask them to do all in their power to support federal nutrition programs and to reduce the numbers of people who are hungry or food insecure.

General Assembly Policy:

The 207th General Assembly (1995) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) called on Congress "to defeat any proposals that base budget or deficit reductions primarily on the services provided to children, families, the needy, and the homeless" and urged strengthening of federal commitments to these groups. The Assembly also called on Congress "to insist on a government that follows ethical values of justice for the poor, welfare for children, hospitality to the stranger, and assistance to the disadvantaged." (Minutes, p. 718)

Message:

To: Senators and Representatives

As a Presbyterian, I am writing to urge you to protect the nutrition assistance programs from actions in the budget reconciliation process that would increase hunger and food insecurity.

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Our concern is rooted in our Biblical tradition. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus was asked, "'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?' ...And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'"

At a time when 36.3 million people in our nation, including 13.3 million children, experience food insecurity, it would be unconscionable if funding for nutrition programs, particularly the food stamp program, were reduced.

Please do all you can to protect the food stamp program from funding reductions.