

Hunger and Poverty in the United States

Congress should protect federal programs that combat poverty and prevent U.S. families from going hungry.

Even though the recession is officially over, record numbers of people in the United States remain in need. In 2010:

- More than one in seven Americans—including more than one in five children—lived below the poverty line (\$22,113 for a family of four).
- The number of people at risk of hunger in the United States increased from 36.2 million in 2007 to 48.8 million in 2010.
- Food banks in the United States saw a 46 percent increase in clients seeking emergency food assistance between 2006 and 2010.
- One in seven Americans currently receives benefits from SNAP (formerly food stamps).
 - Nearly half of SNAP participants are children. Another 8 percent are age 60 or older.
 - 85 percent of SNAP households have incomes at or below the poverty line.
- Refundable tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC), boost household earnings, provide a critical buffer for emergencies, and lift millions of Americans out of poverty every year.
 - These tax credits encourage work. Parents with two children who work 10 hours a week at a minimum-wage job receive less than \$100 from the Child Tax Credit. If they work full time, they receive about \$1,800.
 - In 2010, the EITC lifted 5.4 million people out of poverty, including 3 million children.

Hunger and Poverty around the World

Congress should protect foreign assistance programs that save lives, reduce poverty, and protect our national security. Currently:

- 1.5 billion people live in extreme poverty—on less than \$1.25 a day.
- 990 million people suffer from chronic hunger worldwide.
- In the Horn of Africa, 13 million people are on the brink of starvation, due to the region's worst drought in 60 years.
- A period of volatile food prices forecast over the next decade could lead to instability in poor countries, where people in poverty already spend 50-80 percent of their income on food.

Poverty-focused foreign assistance programs produce real results. In 2010:

- 46.5 million people received emergency food aid provided under the P.L. 480 Food for Peace program, and 5 million children and families received critical food aid through the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and child nutrition programs.
- More than 3 million lives are saved every year through U.S. immunization programs.
- 3.2 million people received treatment for HIV, and 600,000 HIV-positive pregnant women received antiretroviral medications, resulting in more than 114,000 infants to be born HIV-free.

Investments in critical aid programs help build sustainable paths out of hunger and poverty:

- We know that a population too malnourished to work suffers long-term economic consequences. Individuals can suffer a 10 percent reduction in their lifetime earnings, while countries can see 2 to 3 percent annual reductions in their GDP.
- By providing people with the tools they need to lift themselves out of poverty, we create a more stable world. For every 5 percent drop in income growth in a developing country, the likelihood of violent conflict or war within the next year increases by 10 percent.



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