



The World Food Prize

Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, speaking last month at the Vote to End Hunger launch during the Iowa Hunger Summit in Des Moines.

Mobilizing the Power of the Vote to End Hunger

By Adlai Amor

Elections matter. And Bread for the World, along with partner organizations, wants to ensure that ending hunger and poverty becomes a high priority for our next president and Congress.

In fact, we want them to take concrete actions that will put our nation and the world on track to end hunger by 2030.

With that goal in mind, the Vote to End Hunger (VTEH), a new coalition, took root last month with a formal launch during the Iowa Hunger Summit in Des Moines. The launch was the highlight of the summit, which culminated with the announcement of the World Food Prize winner, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed.

But can we really 'vote to end hunger'? Approximately 700 hunger activists attending the summit jumped to their feet and cheered loudly that their votes indeed could end hunger.

(See **VTEH** on page 2)

ACT NOW!

Congress just passed a major budget deal, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which includes \$80 billion of relief from harmful automatic budget cuts, or sequestration, over two years.

This is a huge win. The relief means that there will be additional funding available for programs—both defense and non-defense spending.

However, now congressional leaders must decide how to parcel out this funding by Dec. 11. Urge Congress to prioritize people struggling with hunger and poverty. Tell them to direct funding toward anti-hunger programs, such as WIC, Head Start, low-income housing assistance, Feed the Future, and the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program.

Call the Capitol switchboard to be connected to your member of Congress: 202-224-3121.



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HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.



Hunger activists visit an exhibit booth at the Iowa Hunger Summit in Des Moines last month.

Bishop Richard Pates, archbishop of Des Moines, echoed this sentiment at the launch. “Iowa’s first in the nation status gives us the opportunity to bring this issue to the forefront in the 2016 elections,” he said.

The VTEH coalition (www.votetoendhunger.org) is being organized by the Alliance to End Hunger, Bread for the World, Feeding America, Meals on Wheels America, RESULTS, and Share Our Strength. VTEH adheres to a set of eight principles, among them “ending hunger is not a partisan issue.”

So far, dozens of organizations and individuals have signed on to the VTEH coalition. On Nov. 8, the four dioceses of the Iowa Catholic Conference, Bread for the World, and Methodist, Lutheran, and Episcopal churches, sponsored a “Vote to End Hunger” rally at Grand View University, Des Moines, Iowa. The university is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America in Des Moines.

“Throughout the world, countries such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Great Britain have made tremendous strides in reducing hunger. However, in the United States, we have seen little progress because our nation has not made solving hunger a priority,” said Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. “We need to vote for leaders who care about ending hunger, so the next president and Congress will work together and solve it.”

In the U.S., 1 out of every 7 households—more than 48 million Americans—struggle to put food on the table. These numbers include 5.4 million older Americans and 15 million children. Around the world, 795 million people experience hunger every day.

The growing interest in the VTEH coalition—and other Bread vote to end hunger activities—reflects the results of a recent elections survey commissioned by Bread. The survey, conducted by the Eleison/Mellman Groups, found that 6 out of 10 voters surveyed said that ending hunger should be a priority for the government. Nearly 4 in 10 of those surveyed, 39 percent, agreed that a candidate needs to “fight for government funding for anti-hunger programs to earn my vote.”

Among those surveyed, hunger is of most concern when described in the context of children going hungry, veterans needing food stamps, and working families unable to buy enough food. Programs focused on these three groups are perceived to be important and effective.

“We have seen what brinksmanship in Congress has done to those suffering from hunger and poverty in the U.S. and abroad,” said Eric Mitchell, Bread’s director of government relations. “We must make sure that our next set of leaders put ending hunger as one of their top priorities.”

Bread’s participation in the VTEH coalition is part of our 2016 elections strategy. In last month’s newsletter, we wrote about the presidential videos project being conducted with our partners in the Circle of Protection (www.circleofprotection.us).

Bread staff are now preparing to focus on key congressional districts in Ohio and Florida, and preparing resources for all Bread members to use during the elections in their respective districts. The materials will be available at (www.bread.org/elections).

The Vote to End Hunger strategy builds on our 2014 work that tested elections strategies in Virginia’s 10th Congressional District. We used on-the-ground canvassing among people of faith, market research, and reaction to local advertising.

“The 2016 elections are critical in ensuring ending hunger is a national priority with the new president and Congress starting in 2017,” said LaVida Davis, Bread’s director of grassroots organizing and capacity building. “I call on all our members to be actively involved in making sure we elect leaders who consider ending hunger a priority.”

As a nonpartisan organization, Bread will not be endorsing any particular candidate or party in the 2016 elections.

Adlai Amor is the director of communications and marketing at Bread for the World.

Religious leaders speak out

Turning Our 'Efforts to End Hunger in Our Time'

Editor's note: Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins was a participant at an interfaith summit last month where Bread for the World and other partners brought together 100 religious leaders to discuss how to end hunger and poverty by 2030. This article is adapted from remarks she made the day after the summit.

By Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins

Our different faith traditions find common ground in the call for us to advocate for our neighbors—our local and global neighbors—who struggle with hunger and poverty. Christians take our cue on this from the ministry of Jesus who saw to it that *all* the people were fed.

The 2008 financial crisis brought a food crisis as well—a 40 percent increase in food insecurity in this country. And yet, since 2011, powerful, political forces have pushed for deep and disproportionate cuts in all the programs that go mainly to people in poverty.

As one local pastor said to me: “Our congregation feeds everyone from homeless families and disabled vets, to a grandmother raising grandchildren, to a city employee who works part-time and lives at a shelter. We see new faces every week. As thankful as I am for the faithful response of church members—it is frustrating that, in truth, we are not addressing the root causes.”

She's right. We need to treat hunger as a systemic issue. Small groups of volunteers make a difference. But to get the job done, it will take all of us working together. This reality has already stirred leaders from all this



Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins, at the podium, speaking about ending hunger by 2030.

Zach Blum for Bread for the World

country's faith traditions to join to protect programs for low-income people.

We've been surprisingly successful.

At our request, this year, all the leading presidential candidates—except one—have made video statements about how they would address hunger and poverty—understanding that addressing hunger is important to faith voters.

This month (September), faith-grounded advocacy steps to a new level, spurred by the pope's visit and the international commitment to end hunger and poverty. The religious leaders who gathered at the Sept. 21 End Hunger Summit agreed—with enthusiasm—to join in the effort to end world hunger by 2030. That's in our lifetime!

To that end, we will work toward a shift in U.S. national priorities between now and 2017—starting with this fall, when Congress needs to steer away from brinksmanship and put an end to the sequester.

With these priorities in mind, people of faith will be active in the upcoming election. We will make clear that we want a president and Congress by 2017 who will work together, who will reflect God's special concern for hungry and poor people, our neighbors.

Today, we turn our efforts to end hunger in our time.

Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins is the general minister and president of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.



Order Bread for the World Christmas Cards

Get your 2015 Christmas cards today! When you send Bread for the World cards, your family and friends learn about our vital work to end hunger. A pack of 10 cards and envelopes is just \$15, shipping included. Multiple designs are available. Order online, or call 800/822-7323, ext. 1072 to order your cards today.

2016 Offering of Letters

Bread for the World's 2016 Offering of Letters will focus on ending preventable maternal and child death through nutrition. Zambia will feature prominently in stories. The country is a focus of the Feed the Future program—the U.S. government's global food security initiative.

The 2016 toolkit for coordinators of letter-writing events will contain many of the same items that past years' kits have contained—how-to-information on planning an event, an explanation of the issue, items to help promote your event, videos to show during a presentation, a sample PowerPoint presentation, and more.

The Offering of Letters content will be on the Bread for the World website. In addition, materials will be available in Spanish. Watch the newsletter, Bread's blog, and social media channels for more information about next year's Offering of Letters.



Year-End Giving to Bread for the World

You can give a gift of hope and opportunity to hungry people with your year-end contribution to Bread for the World. Make your gift today by visiting www.bread.org/give. Tax-deductible gifts to Bread for the World Institute support research and analysis that shapes policies and legislation that will help end hunger.

More and more Bread for the World members are making charitable gifts by transferring appreciated stocks to Bread for the World Institute. If you wish to arrange a stock transfer, please contact Kierra Stuvland at 1-800-822-7323, ext. 1150 or email: kstuvland@bread.org.

Anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs safe for now

Congress Passes Two-Year Budget Deal

By Jennifer Gonzalez and Amelia Kegan

After months of fiscal gridlock on Capitol Hill, with threats of a government shutdown or a U.S. default, Congress last month finally passed a two-year federal budget agreement.

The deal was struck just days before House Speaker John A. Boehner of Ohio turned over his gavel to Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin.

This is a momentous victory for Bread for the World members, who spent all year pushing hard for a budget deal that would stop the automatic spending cuts known as sequestration. Sequestration was intended to be the “stick” that convinced Congress to reach a budget deal for 2013: indiscriminate, across-the-board cuts so drastic that both parties would make compromises to avoid them.

But those negotiations failed, and since then, Bread members have been working to limit sequestration’s damage to programs that help hungry and poor people. The budget agreement just reached will prevent about 75 percent of the cuts that would otherwise have been triggered by sequestration in 2016 and 2017—about \$80 billion in “relief” from sequestration.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, the agreement’s formal name, was the product of discussions between congressional leaders and the White House, but it was also a consequence of vocal advocacy from people across the country, demanding a better budget.

“Kudos to Speaker John Boehner for using the occasion of his retirement to get the nation’s work done. This deal is important to all of us, but especially to those who are struggling with hunger and poverty,” said Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. “The budget agreement recognizes that we cannot afford any more cuts to programs serving people who can least afford it. It also reduces uncertainty that could slow economic recovery and weaken the job market.”

The budget deal holds true to all the principles Bread members supported: beyond cancelling \$80 billion of the

automatic cuts, it raises the federal borrowing limit—necessary to prevent the United States from defaulting on its debt, bringing far-reaching harmful economic consequences. It also maintains the “parity principle,” meaning that non-defense spending receives just as much protection from sequestration as defense spending. Congress paid for this legislation in a balanced manner, with responsible cuts and some revenues. Hunger programs were not cut in the process.

The Bipartisan Budget Act isn’t perfect, but it gives the federal government some breathing room from the budget brinksmanship and threats of default of the past couple of years. Critical nutrition and poverty programs are off the chopping block for now.

The next step is equally critical: now that the broader agreement has been enacted, Congress will allocate the funding among the various federal programs. How much funding is given to nutrition and other programs that serve vulnerable people will depend on the outcome of this process. It is essential for Bread members to advocate vigorously for adequate funding for these efforts. The timeframe is short. Congress must pass a spending bill that divides up the funding before Dec. 11 to avoid the threat of another government shutdown.

“Agreement on the budget now allows Congress to focus on other legislative priorities that have serious implications for people struggling with hunger and poverty. First up is ensuring anti-hunger programs receive adequate funding under the new budget agreement. Additional priorities include reauthorizing the child nutrition programs, passing the Global Food Security Act, and making improvements in the earned income tax credit and child tax credit permanent, rather than allowing them to expire,” Beckmann said.

Jennifer Gonzalez is the associate online editor at Bread for the World. Amelia Kegan is Bread’s deputy director of government relations.

Celebrating 30 Years (and Counting) of Leadership on Hunger

By Patricia Bidar

"I am drawn to bringing people together in ways that affect lives. Changing legislation makes this happen," says C. Jean Hayen, BVM. "We can literally help people—here in our country or in other countries—get the sustenance they need for life."

Hayen explains that she joined the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), the community of women religious, after receiving her education from the Sisters. "When I told my mother I wanted to be a BVM, she insisted I check around—just to be sure I knew my options! In 1960, I was received into the BVM community."

Hayen, an Iowa native, took her vows in 1961 and then attended college and earned a master's degree in biology. She created a hands-on elementary science curriculum as part of her master's thesis at St. Mary's College in Minnesota and then returned to Iowa to teach.

It was during the years she taught at Catholic schools in Davenport and Dubuque, she recalls, that she received a letter from Bread for the World. It described Bread's mission and simple actions people can take to help, such as writing letters to their members of Congress that press for legislative changes to help hungry people.

Hayen remembers thinking, "Here is something to help the students be

more social justice-minded—and that I could do along with students and staff." She was inspired to lead an Offering of Letters—the first of many in a history of advocacy that now spans 30 years and is still going strong. The locations and the letter-writers vary, but the Offering of Letters is always about engaging churches, campuses, and other faith communities in writing letters to Congress. The letters are presented as an offering to God before they are mailed.

Each year, the campaign focuses on specific legislation to help people struggling with hunger. Hayen says her students were always willing and happy to be involved. "The offerings were a great teaching tool, because Bread's topic was always a good legislative action to help those in need."

After 22 years of teaching, Hayen became the administrator of a motherhouse that brought together five communities of sisters. She led Offerings of Letters there and in the parish affiliated with the motherhouse. Later she became the Resident Services Coordinator for the Dubuque Housing Initiative—living space for low-income people sponsored by several congregations of women religious.

"I came to help residents with life skills, from balancing checkbooks to nutrition to housekeeping," Hayen says. One of those skills was advocat-



Courtesy C. Jean Hayen

C. Jean Hayen, BVM

ing for policy change through Offering of Letters campaigns.

Since 1996, Hayen has worked in the BVM Community's Mount Carmel Motherhouse in Dubuque. She assists sisters with impaired vision or hearing—putting to work what she learned while earning a certificate in gerontology services. And, of course, she has brought Bread's message with her to Mount Carmel.

"I have a small media center where I house assistive devices which aid in a better quality of life for these retired sisters," she says. "These are women of such wisdom and prayer!"

Hayen notes with appreciation that Bread continues to provide print resources for the Offering of Letters. She suggests that printing some of the materials in larger type would make it easier for older Bread members to read.

In her free time, Hayen enjoys prayer, reading, T'ai Chi, and jigsaw puzzles. She says that puzzles allow her to reflect. "I even take them on retreat," she says. She also enjoys getting together with her large extended family.

Patricia Bidar is a freelance writer.

Quarantined villagers lose access to food during epidemic

Cash, Vouchers Help Liberians During Ebola-Triggered Food Crisis

Across Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, the 2014-2015 Ebola crisis affected hundreds of thousands of families. Husbands lost wives, children lost parents, and communities lost entire families to the deadly disease. While Ebola brought an unprecedented health epidemic, it also gave rise to a less visible crisis—a food crisis.

“We were stigmatized as ‘the Ebola people,’” said Respect*, a 28-year-old living in Montserrado County, Liberia. “I was unable to sell anything I grew in the market.”

Respect described how Ebola hit her community during the early summer of 2014, and how it was one of the first to be affected by what would soon take thousands of lives throughout the region. In Respect’s village, after a pregnant woman died from what was thought to be complications from an abortion, and after her family performed a traditional burial ceremony, it was discovered that she had in fact died from Ebola. The virus spread rapidly through Respect’s community, taking 18 lives.

Over the course of the Ebola crisis, Respect’s village was quarantined more than 10 times. Moreover, Respect, along with the rest of her community, was stigmatized and unable to sell anything in the market. As time went on, borders closed, food prices rose, markets were further disrupted, and food became less accessible to the most vulnerable households. Some families were forced to eat seeds normally used for planting or sell their tools to buy food.

Thanks to a USAID Office of Food for Peace project



Respect shows off her newly grown peppers planted with seeds provided through USAID.

Mette Karlsen/USAID

implemented by Mercy Corps, thousands of Ebola-affected communities received much-needed assistance. Families received cash transfers to purchase food, and agricultural input vouchers to replace seeds and tools to restart planting.

Respect used the cash to buy basic food items and the vouchers to plant peppers in her home garden. Grateful for USAID’s assistance, Respect said she is excited to start her own business and sell her peppers to provide for herself and her household.

The one-year, \$9 million project, which began in January 2015, aims to help more than 150,000 people in Liberia recover from the economic impacts of the Ebola outbreak. Across the region, USAID and its partners are boosting household purchasing power to help vulnerable families buy food and other essential items they need to get back on their feet.

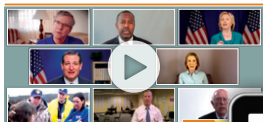
After months of uncertainty and despair due to Ebola, families are restarting their livelihoods, children are back in school, and communities are rebuilding to be stronger than before.

**Last name withheld to protect privacy. This article first appeared on the USAID website.*

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September-October 2015 | www.bread.org



What Does Your Candidate Say About Hunger?

We all know that Bread Strong has the top. Much of it is contained in the Bread for the World's annual Hunger Report. The Bread for the World's annual Hunger Report is a comprehensive look at the state of hunger in the United States and around the world. It is a must-read for anyone who cares about hunger. It is a must-read for anyone who cares about the future of our nation. It is a must-read for anyone who cares about the future of our world.

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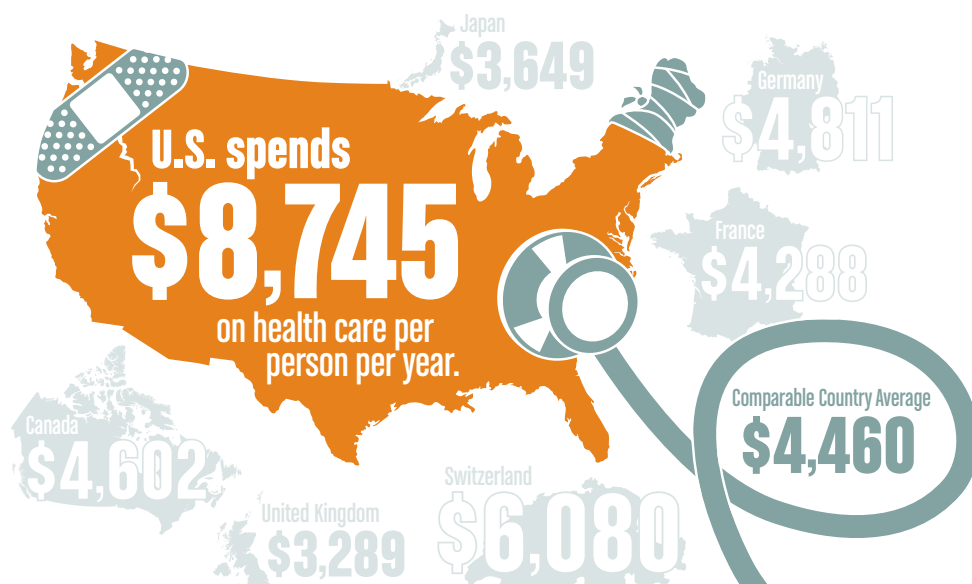
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- ✓ Food insecurity
- ✓ Obesity

Hunger is a health issue. The 2016 Hunger Report, *The Nourishing Effect*, launches Nov. 23. Visit www.hungerreport.org on the day of the launch to learn more.



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Infographic by Doug Puller/Bread for the World