



June/July 2010 Legislative News: The latest in legislative news concerning hunger and nutrition issues

FY 2011 Appropriations

On July 15, the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up its FY 2011 Agriculture Appropriations bill, which allocates spending for many federal nutrition programs. Some of the funding includes:

- \$68.2 billion in mandatory funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-formerly food stamps)
- \$176.78 billion for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- \$7.25 billion for WIC. The funding will provide for an additional \$2 in fruit and vegetable vouchers for child WIC participants to increase the level up to the recommendation by the Institute of Medicine (IOM).
- \$246.5 million for mandatory The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) commodities
- \$56 million for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) administration for storage and distribution
- \$6 million for Food Bank Infrastructure Grants
- \$5 million for the Hunger Free Community Grants
- \$3 million for the Congressional Hunger Center's Hunger Fellowship Program

In the coming weeks, the House Appropriations Committee will consider their version of funding levels for these programs. Once their version passes committee, both bills must be passed by the full House and Senate prior to the next fiscal year that begins on October 1st.

House Education and Labor Committee Approves Child Nutrition Bill

On July 15th, the House Committee on Education and Labor approved its Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill. The "Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act" (H.R. 5504) makes an additional \$800 million per year in new investments to strengthen and enhance child nutrition programs. The bill includes provisions to improve children's access to nutritious meals, enhance the quality of meals both in and out of schools and in child care settings, establish nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold in schools, and strengthen nutrition education, promotion, and technical assistance. Highlights of the bill from the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) include:

- Supporting improvements to direct certification for school meals;
- Providing \$10 million for competitive grant funds to promote the expansion of the School Breakfast Program;
- Creating new paperless options for universal school meals;
- Lowering the area eligibility test for Summer Food to 40 percent in rural areas;
- Creating state pilots that make it easier for schools and community-based organizations to provide meals to children after school, on weekends, and during school holidays;
- Adding in some states an additional meal or snack for children who are in child care for more than eight hours per day; and
- Enhancing the nutritional quality of food served in school-based and preschool settings.
- Expanding the after-school at-risk supper pilot nationwide
- Authorizing competitive grants to strengthen the Summer Food Service Program.
- Provides \$10 million per year to fund the Weekends Without Hunger pilot. This pilot program would offer commodities to schools, food banks, and other providers who provide nutritious food to at-risk school children on weekends and during extended school holidays
- Removes the limits on the number of summer food sites and children that can be served by private non-profit organizations to conform to the school program requirements
- Authorizes \$50 million to encourage states to develop comprehensive child hunger strategies that increase access and participation in child nutrition programs, improve program delivery, and strengthen the coordination of nutrition and other assistance programs.
- Increases access to free/reduced-price school meals for low-income children whose eligibility has already been established through other means without requiring their families to submit applications.

This bill provides substantial and positive new investments in the child nutrition programs that will enable low-income children to access the healthy nutritious food they need. The next step is for the House to identify offsets to pay for the new investments of the bill in order to comply with the House PAYGO rules. Once funding has been identified, the entire House chamber will need to approve the legislation. The Senate bill passed the Agriculture Committee on March 24 and also needs to be approved by the full Senate. Advocates are pushing for Congress to vote on both bills before the end of the legislative session in early October to ensure a new reauthorization bill can be implemented as soon as possible.

New Unemployment Numbers

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the official unemployment rate decreased slightly to 9.5 percent in June 2010. However when factoring people working part-time for economic reasons or too discouraged to look for work are included, the rate of unemployment and underemployment increases to 16.5 percent. To view the report visit: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t15.htm>

Another Record Month for SNAP/Food Stamps Participation

A record 40,430,614 people received SNAP/Food Stamps in April 2010, an increase of 6.7 million people compared with April 2009. It is also an increase of 320,761 individuals from March 2010. Currently one in eight people are receiving food stamp benefits. For more information, visit:

http://www.frac.org/html/news/fsp/2010.04_FSP.htm

New York State Senate Eases Food Stamp Requirements

The New York State Senate passed a bill to end finger imaging requirements for food stamp only applicants and recipients in New York on June 28th. The goal for eliminating this requirement is to simplify access, eliminate a potential barrier and/or deterrent to otherwise eligible applicants, save the State money by removing the requirement and maximize the amount of federally funded food stamp benefits into the state economy.

Before the bill can become law, the Assembly needs to move their version of the bill (A01681) and it will need approval from Governor Patterson. For more information on Senate Bill S6291 [click here](#).

2010 Summer Nutrition Report

According to FRAC's "Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report 2010" only one out of every six eligible low-income children are participating in summer nutrition programs. Summer nutrition programs experienced a drop in participation in 2009, as states and cities were forced to cut budgets during the economic recession. Only 16 percent of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch during the school year also participated in a summer nutrition program nationally. This number is down from 17 percent in 2008 and 21 percent in 2001. New York State fares better as 30.1 percent of students receiving free or reduced-priced school lunches participate in summer nutrition programs-ranking 4th in the nation for participation. This report also takes an annual look at participation in summer nutrition programs, provides data for all states, examines national trends, and provides recommendations on how to increase participation as well as improve programs through Child Nutrition Reauthorization. For a copy of the report visit: http://www.frac.org/pdf/summer_report_2010.pdf

If you have any questions or would like to submit a story for next month, please email bslater@foodbankcny.org

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