

break bread

Illinois Community Action Association
Food Security & Advocacy News

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2006

House Subcommittee Passes FY 2007 Funding for Nutrition Programs

Source: www.frac.org, May 4, 2006

On May 3, the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee reported out its FY 2007 funding bill for the Department of Agriculture. Highlights of some program funding have been released. The Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee is not expected to take up its bill until after the Memorial Day recess. In general, the Administration's proposal to eliminate CSFP and harmful proposals to WIC are not in the subcommittee bill. On the other hand, additional funding was not provided to expand the Simplified Summer Food Program ("Lugar Pilots"). The document describes subcommittee's action on the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP); WIC; food stamps; child nutrition programs; TEFAP; farmers' market programs; and fresh fruit and vegetable pilots and funding for the Community Food and Nutrition Program remains eliminated.



Illinois - Food Pantry Use up 25% in 15 Months

Source: www.nwtimes.com, April 25, 2006

In Cook County alone, nearly half a million people — a large number of them children — rely on food from the Greater Chicago Food Depository's network of almost 600 shelters, pantries and soup kitchens. "I had a guy come in the food pantry and say, 'I worked and made \$70,000 last year. I never thought I'd see myself in this position,'" said Carrie McCormack, coordinator at Lakeview Pantry West.

More than 25 million Americans use food banks, according to a 2005 national study by America's Second Harvest, the country's largest hunger relief organization.

Lakeview Pantry runs two food distribution centers on Chicago's North Side to better serve residents in the area, a neighborhood considered fairly affluent by many.

"There are a lot of people coming to us, especially in the past six years, who are coming to use this service for the first time," said Greg Nergaard, coordinator of the Lakeview Pantry East location. The facility

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Public Policy Spotlight

Congress Moves to Lock in Tax Cuts for Rich

Source: www.bloomberg.com, May 8, 2006

The Republican majority in Congress is trying to lock in the 15 percent tax rate on investment income and to repeal the estate tax before new elections might change the balance of power. President Bush's supporters say lower taxes on investments and multimillion-dollar estates will sustain economic growth. The Securities Industry Association is lobbying for the cuts, arguing that its members fear investors will flee the markets if

they sense higher rates are on the horizon. While pushing for measures largely benefiting the rich, Republican leaders in Congress are not pursuing extensions of lower rates for all taxpayers and expanded breaks for married

couples and families with children, which expire after 2010. IRS data show that taxpayers with incomes of at least \$1 million reaped 43 percent of all savings from reduced rates on

dividends and capital gains. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that the estate tax elimination would cost the government \$78.8 billion in revenue a year by 2016 and that renewing the investment tax breaks would cost \$50 billion in lost government revenue.

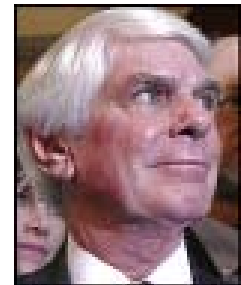


House of Representatives Committee Rejects President's Proposed CSFP Cut

Source: www.washingtonpost.com, May 9, 2006

The House Appropriations Committee has saved from the chopping block the Commodity Supplemental Food Program that provides food boxes to nearly 500,000 seniors each month. President Bush had proposed to kill the program, but it received broad support among

lawmakers. The committee approved a bill that would increase the program's budget by 10 percent. The Agriculture Appropriations bill is the first of 11 spending bills to clear the committee for FY 2007. Republican committee chairman Jerry Lewis helped to transfer \$6.4 billion from defense and foreign aid budgets to mitigate the President's proposed cuts to domestic programs. Even with this shift, Republicans are finding living within Bush's budget limits difficult.



Illinois: Breakfast Buddies Program Grows Into Keep-Up-The-Spirit Packages to Iraq

Source: www.rrstar.com, May 10, 2006

Since November last year, Keith School students in Rockford, Ill., have sent “Smiles to Iraq” – packages filled with letters, thank-you notes and artwork – to keep up the spirits of American troops. The initiative grew out of Christine Hermie’s small, before-school Breakfast Buddies program and became a popular school project. “People may not believe in the war, but we are not going there with it,” Hermie said. “We just want our soldiers to come home safely.”



Storm relief exceeds \$730,000

Source: State Journal Register, May 03, 2006

Since the March 12 tornadoes tore through Springfield, three local charities estimate they have spent more than \$730,000 to help storm victims. The local chapters of the American Red Cross, Contact Ministries and The Salvation Army tallied the spending, which includes everything from emergency food and medicine to checks to help people repair their homes.

The three organizations have raised more than \$440,000 in donations to offset the relief efforts, and they expect the fundraising and assistance to continue. Rita Monkman-Tarr, executive director of Contact Ministries, said recovery efforts could last for another year or longer.

“We focused our money first on emergency needs, such as replacing food that had been lost ... and making sure basic needs had been covered,” Monkman-Tarr said. “Once we went through that phase, then we started processing applications for people who needed assistance with rent and utility bills because they had missed work, or because they had to relocate because of actual damage that was done to their homes. “Now, we are also focusing on some of the repairing and rebuilding, as well as some of the demolition expenses that individuals have not been able to recoup money for.” This week, Monkman-Tarr said there still is a need for beds, especially bunk beds.

The Red Cross provided money for food, clothing, shelter, first month’s rent and deposit, minor home repairs and medications. Tim Ryerson, chief executive officer for the Capital Area Chapter, said the Red Cross spent more than twice what it has raised because of the urgent need.

Capt. Deon Oliver, commanding officer of the Salvation Army Corps Community Center, said a significant amount of the money went to food. The Salvation Army also helped people with clothing, prescription drugs and furniture.

The Central Illinois Foodbank said it doled out 22,500 pounds of food specifically for tornado relief, and the individual food pantries the food bank supplies probably provided additional food to families affected by the tornadoes. The food bank received about 10,000 pounds of donated food for its tornado-relief effort.

Other agencies, charities and individuals also have helped in the recovery. About \$50,000, for example, was made available to the lieutenant governor’s office by an anonymous donor.

People wishing to help can contact the charities at the following numbers: Contact Ministries, 753-3939; Red Cross, 522-3357; Salvation Army, 525-2196; and the Central Illinois Food Bank, 522-4022.

What's Going On a national perspective

Letter Carriers Organized Annual Nationwide Food Drive on May 13

Source: www.ydr.com, May 1, 2006

Each spring for the last 14 years the National Association of Letter Carriers has conducted the nation's largest one-day food drive to restock food pantries when they are at their leanest. According to food banks, springtime is when holiday donations are gone and their larders are bare, says Drew Von Bergen of the Letter Carriers. Summertime presents its own challenge because the children of low-income families are not benefiting from school breakfast and lunch programs. The letter carriers bring in more food than any other drive or solicitation, said George Lenker of the Salvation Army. On May 13th postmen collected nonperishable food donations left beside mailboxes and in post offices for collection by participating food pantries and shelters. The goal is to provide enough staples to enable people to buy the fresh meats and produce they want, Lenker said. Campbell Soup and the U.S. Postal Service together will print 110 million postcards to encourage the public to participate in the drive.

Deal will slim US school drinks

Source: newsday.com, May 3, 2006

High-calorie fizzy drinks will no longer be sold in thousands of schools across the US after a deal agreed by the country's top drinks distributors.

The move means only unsweetened juice, water and low-fat milks will be sold in elementary and middle schools, with diet drinks allowed in high schools. Drinks giants Cadbury Schweppes, Coca Cola and PepsiCo have signed up to the deal, aimed at reducing obesity. It is expected to affect 87% of the school drinks market.

The deal was brokered by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation - a joint initiative of the William J Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association (AHA) - as part of a healthy schools program. It follows growing fears generated by reports of rising childhood obesity, for which fizzy drinks are often partly blamed because of their high calorific content and popularity with children.

Under the agreement, sugary and calorific drinks will no longer be available in vending machines and cafeterias, or at after-school activities held on school

grounds. The restrictions will also apply to drinks schools buy from the distributors for sales at sporting events and fundraisers. However, sales at events such as school plays, concerts and sporting events where a significant proportion of the audience were adults would not be affected, a Clinton Foundation spokesman said.

'Major effort'

"I don't think anyone should underestimate the influence this agreement will have," said Susan Neely, president and CEO of the American Beverage Association. The association represents major manufacturers and distributors of non-alcoholic drinks across the US. AHA president Robert Eckel said the deal was "really the beginning of a major effort to modify childhood obesity at the level of the school systems".

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation said nearly 35 million students would be affected nationwide. The agreement applies to all public schools which have contracts with the distributors.



Corporate Media and Advocacy Journalism

Source: Media Beat, May 16, 2006



We see this kind of news story now and again. Sometimes we try to imagine the people behind the numbers, the human realities underneath the surface abstractions. But overall, the responses testify to journalism's failings — and our own.

"Poor nutrition contributes to the deaths of some 5.6 million children every year," an **Associated Press** dispatch said in early May, citing new data from the U.N. Children's Fund. And: "In its report, UNICEF said one of every four children under age 5, including 146 million children in the developing world, is underweight."

The future is bleak for many children who will be born in the next decade. As **AP** noted, "the world has fallen far short in efforts to reduce

hunger by half before 2015."

Reading this news over a more-than-ample breakfast, I thought about the limitations of journalistic work that is often done with the best of intentions. Try as they might, reporters and editors don't often go beyond the professional groove of the media workplace. Journalists routinely function as cogs in media machinery that processes tragedy as just another news commodity.

Many people are troubled by the patterns of negative events around the world. And hunger is especially disturbing; in an era of prodigious affluence for some, the absence of basic nutrition for huge numbers of human beings is a basic moral obscenity. Across the spectrums of culture, faith and ideologies — whether remedies might seem to lie in religious charity or governmental action — heartfelt desire to reduce suffering is very common.

News outlets are adept at producing vivid stories about misfortune. Those stories might be emotionally affecting or even politically mobilizing in terms of

relief efforts. But the overarching matter of priorities is not apt to come into media focus. In general, corporate-employed journalists are not much more inclined to hammer at the skewed character of national and global priorities than corporate chieftains or government officials are.

In a world where so much wealth and so much poverty coexist, the maintenance of a rough status quo depends on a sense of propriety that borders on — and even intersects with — moral if not legal criminality. The

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Texas: Gas Price Hikes Leave Taxi Drivers in Need of Food Stamps, Other Assistance

Source: www.ktsm.com, April 24, 2006

With rising gasoline prices, taxi drivers are making less money as their companies try not to lose customers by increasing fares. "The gas prices are affecting drivers, not the company, not the customer but the driver," says Albaro Nieto, Border Cab Company driver from El Paso, Texas. Albaro says the rates have not been adjusted in a few years, and the recent gas price hikes are making life hard for his family. "We need food stamps, government assistance, as soon as possible," says Nieto.



What's Going On

an international perspective

Americans Spend More on Health Care than English but Are Sicker, Study Says

Source: www.cnn.com, May 2, 2006

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* published a study that says Americans are much sicker than their British counterparts, although American health care spending per person is more than double what England spends. Americans of all incomes have



higher rates for diabetes, heart disease, strokes, cancer and other diseases. "At every point in the social hierarchy there is more illness in the United States than in England and the differences are really dramatic," said study co-author Dr.

Michael Marmot, an epidemiologist at University College London. Experts disagree about the factors that lead to the already-known fact that the United States spends more on health care than any other industrialized nation, but lags behind in rankings of life expectancy. According to the study, the upper crust in both countries was healthier than middle-class and low-income people in the same country, but richer Americans' health status resembled the health of the low-income British. The study focused just on whites to take minority health factors out of the equation and also adjusted for income and education. Among causes for the remaining gap, experts speculate, are: poorer job the United States does compared to other industrialized countries in providing primary medical care; Americans' financial insecurity (only the top fifth of Americans increased their incomes since the mid-1970s, while English citizens saw their incomes improve); and the stress of striving for the American dream in an environment that lacks a reliable government safety net like the one in England. "The opportunity to go both up and down the socioeconomic scale in America may create stress," said Harvard professor Robert Blendon.

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Every Minute 10 Children Die from Malnutrition in Developing Countries

Source: www.independent.co.uk, May 3, 2006

Ten children die every minute as a result of malnutrition in the developing world, according to a new United Nations report. It

found that 146 million children under age 5 suffer from insufficient food intake, repeated infectious diseases, muscle wastage and vitamin deficiencies. Three quarters of the undernourished children come from just 10 countries, including 57 million children suffering from malnutrition in India and 8 million each in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Almost half of all children in south Asia are underweight, and girls have higher hunger rates than boys. In Iraq, 16 percent of children go hungry, a rate "substantially higher" than in 1990. China and Latin American nations have made progress in reducing childhood hunger, but the overall



the hungry in half by 2015. "Few things have more impact than nutrition on a child's ability to survive, learn effectively and escape a life of poverty," said Ann Veneman, executive director of Unicef. "We still have time to achieve ... [the 2005] goal, but only if the international community acts now to deliver the commitments and resources it has promised."

decrease in hunger is considerably slower than the 2.8 percent annual reduction needed to fulfill the pledge by the world's leaders to cut the proportion of

How Bad are the Feel-Good Foods

Source: Chicago Tribune, May 14, 2006

Comfort food seekers must learn to distinguish between physical hunger and emotional craving, say dietitians. The food-mood connect has existed ever since human beings began chomping on raw berries to stave off hunger. But it's only now that modern physicians, neurologists and psychologists are focusing on how certain types of foods—classified as 'comfort foods'—directly and strongly impact our minds and body. Ergo, some foods send strong messages through neurotransmitters or 'chemical messengers' to our brain, influencing our emotions and moods. "Calorie-dense foods—like chocolates, sweetmeats, deep-fried items, junk food and ice-cream—have pleasurable associations, which lead us to crave for them," explains physician Dr Ravinder K Tuli, head of the Department of Holistic Healing at Delhi's Apollo Indraprastha Hospital.



"Similarly, certain nutrients like fats and complex carbohydrates have physiological properties which act as mood elevators. These nutrients release endorphins, the

feel-good hormones, in the body, thus heightening our sense of well-being." But what exactly are these 'feel-good' foods?

"Comfort foods are those foods which address a person's emotional need more than a physical one," explains psychologist Dr Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Consultant, Vidyasagar Institute of Mental and Health and Neurological Studies (VIMHANS), New Delhi. "Physical satiation is usually not the agenda here. Since reaching out for comfort foods signals an emotion-linked hunger, the reasons could vary from depression, stress at work and broken relationships to diet plans gone awry, anything."

Hence dieticians advice that comfort food seekers should learn to distinguish between physical hunger - which builds up gradually and tells the brain clearly when to stop - and emotional eating, which is sporadic, sudden and often prolonged.

Also, emotional eating is irrational, says Ishi Khosla, a Delhi-based clinical nutritionist.

"You just don't want it to end; you want to keep gorging on whatever is available, regardless of the food's nutritive value. On the



contrary, real and physical hunger sends an unambiguous signal to the brain to stop when our tummies are full." Also, adds Khosla, emotional hunger riddles us with guilt while normal hunger seems "well-earned and, therefore, leads to no negative feelings".

According to a survey done by the University of Illinois Food and Brand Lab in the US in 2000, men and older people "...prefer comfort foods that are warm, hearty and meal-related, such as steaks, soups and casseroles, while women and kids reach out for snacks or finger foods, such as chips, savouries, ice-cream and chocolate". So is consuming comfort food all bad then? "Not at all," says Dr Swati Chaddha, consultant dietitian, Max Healthcare, New Delhi. "In fact, satisfying an occasional craving for comfort food is a great stress-buster because it leads to physical and mental satiety, which in turn triggers off the feel-good factor. Occasional bingeing helps us detangle our emotions and focus more productively on the task at hand. But the trick is to not give in to such binges too frequently."

More Information

CORPORATE *continued*

institutional realities of power may numb us to our own personal sense of the distinction between what is just and what is just not acceptable.

On this planet in 2006, no greater contrast exists than the gap between human hunger and military spending. While international relief agencies slash already-meager food budgets because of funding shortfalls, the largesse for weaponry and war continues to be grotesquely generous. The globe's biggest offender is the United States government, which at the current skyrocketing rate of expenditures is — if you add up all the standard budgets and “supplemental” appropriations for war — closing in on a time when U.S. military spending will reach \$2 billion per day.



This is what Martin Luther King Jr. was talking about in 1967 when he warned: “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” Such an occurrence isn’t sudden; it overtakes us gradually, becoming part of the normalized scenery.

Journalism, in its prevalent incarnations, has a strong tendency to blend into that scenery. And whether you’re working in a newsroom or watching in a living room or reading at a breakfast table, it takes a conscious act of will to look at the big picture — and challenge the reigning priorities that are simultaneously quite proper and horrific.

We’re encouraged to see high-quality journalism as dispassionate, so that professionals do their jobs without advocating. But passive acceptance of murderous priorities in our midst is a form of de facto advocacy. It’s advocacy of the most convincing sort — by example.

A hoary cliché says money makes the world go ’round. The extent to which that’s true may be arguable. But deeper questions revolve around the priorities that ought to determine the profoundly important choices made by individuals and institutions. Journalism can’t answer those questions. But journalism should ask them.

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ILLINOIS *continued*

has experienced a 25 percent increase in clients since January 2005.

”At the same time we’ve seen a demand in our services,” Nergaard noted, “the USDA program that distributes food through places like the Chicago Food Depository has actually reduced the amount of food they give out.” The depository says it distributes more than 40 million pounds of food annually.

With the Lakeview pantries receiving less than 2 percent of their funding from federal grants, daily operations depend heavily on private donations. Almost 40 percent of the households receiving Greater Chicago Food

Depository services have at least one working adult, and 9 percent of clients are homeless. Working poor families, parents of young children and the elderly are those most often in need of food support, but even college students are clients.

”We serve college students quite regularly,” Nergaard said. “After they buy their textbooks and pay tuition, they can have real trouble feeding themselves.”

According to the Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation, more than 1.4 million people in Illinois — more than 10 percent of the state’s population — can’t afford to buy enough food.

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Tuesday, June 6, 2006 was National Hunger Awareness Day

National Hunger Awareness Day is the grassroots movement to raise awareness about the solvable problem of hunger in America. This day serves as a platform for domestic hunger-relief organizations to raise awareness about hunger in America and the work we do.

National Hunger Awareness Day Symposium 2006

A coalition of organizations in the anti-hunger community, agriculture sector, federal government, conservation groups, the food industry and the faith community came together on the eve of National Hunger Awareness Day to address the growing number of hungry Americans and chart a course for change for 2006.

During the course of Symposium, guests participated in discussions based on these important themes:

- From the Hill: Initial Thoughts on the Farm Bill Reauthorization
- From the Hunger Caucus: The Landscape of Hunger in America
- From the Heartland: Agriculture's Role in Ending Hunger
- From the Pulpit: The Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Ending Hunger
- From the Kitchens: Providing Nutritious Food For All
- From the Private Sector: Labor and Industry Collaboration

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If someone you know has an interest in food assistance programs or nutrition advocacy, we would be happy to add them to our mailing list.

The break bread staff would like to thank the USDA's midwest region, food and nutrition service for the inspiration for this newsletter. Their newsletter, *insight...out*, focuses on nutrition news and can be obtained by contacting kathleen.fiorito@fns.usda.gov.

ICAA's Mission Statement

The Illinois Community Action Association is a membership organization which serves as the network for Illinois' not-for-profit corporations and units of government which strive to raise the health, education and economic standards of the low income population in every county within the State of Illinois. The Illinois Community Action Association serves the collective interests of its members by: advocating public policies, promoting the value of the Association, providing information on issues relevant to the membership, and building partnerships that advance the community action network.

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