

get to 720-3631

~~Greg Frazier~~
~~OMB's Ag. person~~

~~Martha Foley~~

~~John Angel~~

~~Bruce~~

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Frazier

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Jamie L Witten Fed Bldg

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14 Independence
DC 20250



June 7, 1996

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE:

On behalf of the 1.4 million members of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, I am deeply concerned about the continuing efforts to make structural and drastic funding cuts in our national nutrition safety net, particularly in the food stamp program.

I urge you to reject H.R. 3507 or any other measure that would allow states to undermine the fundamental entitlement structure by opting for a food stamp block grant. Moreover, I urge you to reject changes in eligibility and benefits that, in the guise of welfare reform, would take food out of the mouths of needy persons, especially children. Reform of the welfare system should mean something other than cutting over \$30 billion from the food stamp and child nutrition programs. These cuts represent approximately 60 percent of all welfare bill cuts. This is not reform. It is a prescription for creating more poverty and hunger.

In the retail food industry, where UFCW members work, the food stamp program plays an important role in stabilizing the food purchase economy, as well as making it possible for stores in low-income areas to continue to operate. Massive cutbacks would almost certainly have a destabilizing impact on outlets in many communities.

In times of economic downturn or natural disasters, food stamps will be desperately needed as a countercyclical effort and the program will have to provide food for many families who will suffer job and income losses. In contrast, block grants will not allow the flexibility to deal with these national problems during bad economic times.

H.R. 3507's proposal to cut food stamp spending by over \$28 billion over six years would greatly restrict the ability of low-income families to purchase food from normal commercial channels. The proposed funding cut is equivalent to over 20 billion meals lost over that period. And those are meals that charities tell us they are not equipped to make up, even if it were somehow desirable for families to go outside normal commercial channels for food.

Douglas H. Dority
International
President

Joseph C. Talarico
International
Secretary-Treasurer



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TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE
U.S. HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

June 7, 1996

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A recent study conducted by the independent Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) estimates that under current law half a billion dollars in groceries are not purchased in a 12-month period as a result of the lack of participation in the food stamp program by eligible working single mothers. Based on the study, IWPR predicts, "[F]urther declines in the economic well-being of these families and losses in purchasing power are likely to occur if current proposals to curtail either Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or the food stamp program are enacted. As a result, nutritional levels may well decrease."

The food stamp program has worked well as a federal safety net. It must remain that. The nation cannot afford to experiment with block grants and massive cutbacks. The UFCW appeals to you to prevent sharp increases in U.S. hunger and malnutrition by opposing block grants and large funding reductions for the food stamp and other nutrition programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angela H. Acity". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Angela" being the most prominent part.

International President