

HUNGER RELIEF ACT

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DEMOCRATIC OFFICE OF

THE UNITED STATES SENATE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

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Hunger Relief Act Info

**PRESS RELEASE OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY
ANNOUNCING INTRODUCTION OF THE HUNGER RELIEF ACT OF 1999
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1999**

For Immediate Release
October 27, 1999

Contact: Jim Manley
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Senator Edward M. Kennedy was joined today by Senators Arlen Specter, Patrick Leahy, and James Jeffords in issuing a bipartisan call for repeal of some of the most severe restrictions of the 1996 welfare reform law, as they introduced their "Hunger Relief Act of 1999."

"Too many children and working families in America are hungry right now, even in this time of unparalleled prosperity," said Senator Kennedy, who cited a series of recent reports on this problem:

- In July 1999, the Department of Agriculture reported that 6.6 million adults and 3.4 million children live in households that experienced hunger during 1998, and 36 million people comprising 10.2% of the nation's households lack secure access to enough food for an active, healthy life.
- In the same month, the Congressional General Accounting Office reported that of the 14 million U.S. children who live in poverty, the proportion of them who receive food stamps dropped from 94.6% in 1995 to 84.1% in 1997. During 1997 alone, the number of children living in poverty decreased by 350,000, but the number of children receiving Food Stamps decreased by 1.3 million. GAO's report concludes, "children's participation in the Food Stamp Program has dropped more sharply than the number of children living in poverty, indicating a growing gap between need and assistance."
- In January 1999, the Urban Institute released the results of its study of former welfare recipients and reported that 33% have to skip or cut meals due to lack of food. This result is corroborated by independent studies conducted in Wisconsin and South Carolina, and by NETWORK's National Welfare Reform Project.
- In 1998, surveys of emergency food providers conducted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and Second Harvest Food Banks independently documented that the need for emergency food services increased 15-20% over 1997, and that almost 40% of emergency food clients live in households in which an adult is employed.
- The Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project completed surveys of over 5000 low-income families in 1994—the most comprehensive study of childhood hunger ever undertaken in the U.S.—and found that approximately 4 million children under age 12 were hungry, and 9.6 million were at risk of hunger.

Two weeks ago, USDA ranked Massachusetts as the state with the second lowest hunger rate, but Kennedy called the level unacceptably high: "We cannot rest when 6.3% of households in Massachusetts are still hungry or at risk of hunger, and when thousands of Massachusetts children who still live in poverty no longer have access, to the nutrition safety net provided by Food Stamps." Kennedy also cited an April 1999 study of families who have left welfare conducted by the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, which describes how some families go three or four days without food. "If this is the second best in the nation," said Kennedy, "then our nation has some serious work to do to feed its people. We have the resources to do much better than this, and we must do better. Hunger anywhere in America is unacceptable."

Americans overwhelmingly recognize that hunger is also closely linked to health, education, and workplace problems and that adequate nutrition should be available to all people. Over three hundred national, regional, and local organizations have signed a Food Research and Action Center letter in support of the Hunger Relief Act. Even before welfare reform was enacted, a January 1996 poll found that 55% of Americans believe hunger is worsening in our country, and 74% felt that more should be done to combat hunger in America.

Senator Kennedy began investigating the changes needed in the Food Stamp Program after Tufts University and Massachusetts' Project Bread published a detailed account of hunger among working families in Massachusetts in November 1998. This report documents substantial increases in the need for emergency food assistance among working families and tells many of the same kinds of stories that working families write to Senator Kennedy about their difficulties in putting enough nutritious food on the table. To address their most urgent needs, Senator Kennedy identified four specific problems in the Food Stamp Program, and drafted the Hunger Relief Act to correct them.

First, the Hunger Relief Act repeals the many restrictions of the 1996 welfare reform law on access to Food Stamps for legal immigrants. For 30 years prior to the welfare reform law, Food Stamp eligibility was based upon need alone. The 1996 welfare reform law denied Food Stamps to legal immigrants. Last year, Congress restored food stamp eligibility to some legal immigrants (children, seniors, and disabled persons) who were in the United States *before* August 1996. This was an important first step, but it helped only one third of the 935,000 legal immigrants who were adversely affected by the 1996 law. Hunger among legal immigrants predictably increased after 1996, although more legal immigrants held low-income jobs and paid taxes. Children continue to be denied benefits because they arrived in the U.S. after 1996 or because exclusion of their parents directly results in decreased access to Food Stamps for them. Our laws recognize that legal immigrants need access to employment, education, and health care programs, yet all of these efforts are compromised when legal immigrants are denied access to adequate nutrition. The Hunger Relief Act ensures that all those who need Food Stamps may obtain them.

Second, the Hunger Relief Act encourages work and safety among low-income families by relaxing federal limits on the value of a vehicle that a family may own and still remain

eligible for Food Stamps. The current federal limit is \$4650, which has risen by only \$150 since 1977. Because low-income parents commonly need a vehicle to work and to safely transport their children, many states have adopted vehicle allowance standards for their assistance programs that are more generous than the federal standard. By allowing states the option of applying their vehicle standards instead of the federal standard, the Hunger Relief Act gives states the flexibility to promote work and childhood safety among low-income families, while ensuring that their nutritional needs are met. "The case of a single parent of three young children in Northeastern Massachusetts is typical," said Senator Kennedy. "The mother's income recently dropped to \$928 per month, but she is denied Food Stamps because the value of her car exceeds \$4650. I don't believe that Massachusetts would reject her application under its law, but the federal law requires her pleas for help to be rejected. Our Hunger Relief Act will change that."

Third, the Hunger Relief Act enables families to qualify for food stamps when they have to spend more than 50% of their income on housing costs. Low-income families must often pay high rent for substandard housing in many cities today. In Boston, the average rent for a two bedroom apartment rose by 58% between 1990 and 1998 after adjusting for inflation, to \$1,350. The Women's Educational and Technical Union documented that single parents with one infant pay an average rent of \$839 in Boston, \$709 in Worcester, and \$578 in Pittsfield. All of these figures far exceed half of a minimum wage worker's income. While present law permits some shelter costs to be deducted when determining Food Stamp eligibility, the deduction is capped too low. The Hunger Relief Act raises the cap from \$275 to \$340, and then indexes it to inflation, increasing access to Food Stamps for approximately 1.25 million people. For example, a family from Centerville, Massachusetts recently sought food assistance, and the agency reported their story to Senator Kennedy. "This family of a working mother and three children subsists on \$1,433 in income each month, yet their shelter costs exceed \$1,200. This mother cannot possibly meet her children's nutritional needs on \$233 each month, even if the family spends money on nothing besides shelter and food. The Hunger Relief Act is intended to improve lives like those of this family," said Senator Kennedy.

Fourth, the Hunger Relief Act increases federal support for emergency food programs. With the steep declines in Food Stamp participation have come sharp increases in requests for help from food pantries and soup kitchens. Nationally, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and Second Harvest Food Banks have independently documented a 15-20% increase in needs over 1998. 79% of Massachusetts food pantries funded through Project Bread reported serving more working poor in 1998, and 72% reported helping more families with children. To ensure that emergency food needs are met without unnecessarily tapping Food Stamp resources, the Hunger Relief Act increases federal funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program by 10%.

"This bill is an important step to meet the most urgent needs that have been identified," said Senator Kennedy. "I hope we can move quickly to address these needs, and then evaluate what else must be done to eradicate hunger in our land. In addition to the Hunger Relief Act, one of the most important things we can do to limit hunger among working families is to raise the minimum wage by \$1 over the next two years. No one who works full time should have to live

in poverty unable to properly feed a child. Recently I learned of a family in Orange, Massachusetts whose plight speaks for millions across the country. Despite working full time in a manufacturing plant, the father relies on assistance from the local food pantry. His income of \$1,040 per month isn't enough to feed his disabled wife and two children. These problems are plaguing communities around the country, and Congress needs to resolve them."

"I welcome the support of Senators Specter, Leahy and Jeffords in this bipartisan effort and I look forward to early action in the Senate to pass this needed legislation."

THE HUNGER RELIEF ACT OF 1999

SUMMARY

Hunger persists in America despite a strong economy. While participation in the Food Stamp program declined over 27% in the past 3.5 years, poverty has declined only 7%, leaving 6 million more poor people without Food Stamps today than in 1995. Many working parents still struggle to feed their families. A July 1999 GAO study concludes, "children's participation in the Food Stamp Program has dropped more sharply than the number of children living in poverty, indicating a growing gap between need and assistance." USDA determined that 6.1 million adults and 3.3 million children live in households that experienced hunger during 1998. Hunger rates are highest in households with children led by single women and minorities. An Urban Institute study of former welfare recipients finds that 33% have to skip or cut meals due to lack of food.

Secure access to nutrition improves health, education, and labor outcomes. Children who lack adequate, daily nutrition score lower on tests, have more disciplinary difficulties, and face increased health risks. Hunger diminishes adults' health and ability to concentrate as well. Decades ago the Food Stamp Program became the nation's primary defense against hunger, and today it provides an average daily benefit of \$2.29 per person. The Hunger Relief Act invests \$2.5 billion over 5 years to repair specific cracks that time has wrought in the Food Stamp Program, increasing Program costs by 2% to cure hunger in working families.

TITLE I—ONCE AGAIN BASES FOOD STAMP ELIGIBILITY EXCLUSIVELY UPON NEED:

Food Stamp eligibility was based exclusively upon need for over 30 years. The 1996 welfare reform law changed course, disqualifying people for Food Stamps based on immigration status alone. Last year Congress restored eligibility to a third of the legal immigrants who need assistance. Those who remain ineligible include taxpayers working in low-income jobs, the elderly, parents sharing resources with children, and children who arrived in America after 1996. The Hunger Relief Act restores Food Stamp eligibility to all legal immigrants.

TITLE II—PERMITS STATES TO DETERMINE HOW TO COUNT THE VALUE OF A VEHICLE:

Most low-income parents need a car to get to work, but families who own a vehicle worth more than \$4,650 are subject to disqualification from the Food Stamp Program. This limit has risen but \$150 since 1977, and is below the amount that most states deem appropriate for allowing working parents to own a reliable car and still qualify for cash assistance under TANF. Also, disparate vehicle allowance standards for Food Stamps and TANF increase administrative costs for states in both programs. The Hunger Relief Act allows states the option of using the same rules to count the value of a vehicle under both TANF and Food Stamps.

TITLE III—INDEXES THE SHELTER DEDUCTION CAP TO INFLATION: To make Food Stamp allotments more accurately reflect actual household need, applicants may deduct from their available resources shelter costs that exceed 50% of their income. Congress phased out the cap on this deduction in 1993, but restored it in 1996. It is now \$275. Elderly individuals are exempt from the cap, but working families are still subject to it. This cap reduces food stamp benefits to over 729,000 households with children as housing costs rise, forcing many families to choose between heating and eating. In their April 1999 nationwide report, Housing America and the Doc4Kids Project carefully describe adverse health, educational, and nutrition consequences wrought by a shortage of low-cost housing. USDA cites city centers as the areas with highest hunger rates. The Hunger Relief Act raises the shelter deduction cap to \$340 and then indexes it to inflation.

TITLE IV—ENSURES THAT EMERGENCY FOOD NEEDS ARE MET: Since 1983 The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) has leveraged private and volunteer resources to meet short-term nutrition needs of families in crisis, provided an outlet for excess government-owned commodities, and reduced need for recourse to Food Stamps. Need for emergency food has increased 15-20% over the past year according to food banks surveyed across the nation. In 1998, 39% of families who sought emergency food included an employed adult, and 38% of emergency food clients were children. The private charitable sector cannot meet present needs alone. The Hunger Relief Act authorizes additional appropriations of \$100 million over five years for commodity purchases and food distribution costs, approximately 10% more than present spending.



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PRELIMINARY

Estimate of Effects of the "Hunger Relief Act of 1999"

10/25/99

Based on draft legislation dated October 19, 1999 and discussion with staff.

Federal costs, by fiscal year, in millions

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Five-Year Total	Ten-Year Total
DIRECT SPENDING												
Section 2: Restores Food Stamp eligibility to qualified aliens a/												
Budget Authority	10	30	115	200	275	355	370	385	395	410	630	2,545
Outlays	10	30	115	200	275	355	370	385	395	410	630	2,545
Section 3: Allow states the option to align Food Stamp vehicle allowance with TANF policy b/												
Food Stamp Program												
Budget Authority	30	195	335	345	355	365	380	390	400	410	1,260	3,205
Outlays	30	195	335	345	355	365	380	390	400	410	1,260	3,205
TANF												
Budget Authority	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outlays	0	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	18	43
Medicaid												
Budget Authority	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	16
Outlays	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	16
Section 4: Changes to the cap on the excess shelter deduction c/												
Budget Authority	10	85	105	135	160	195	230	270	315	365	495	1,670
Outlays	10	85	105	135	160	195	230	270	315	365	495	1,670
Interactions												
Budget Authority	d/	1	2	4	5	7	8	9	11	13	12	60
Outlays	d/	1	2	4	5	7	8	9	11	13	12	60
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATIONS												
Section 5: Emergency Food Assistance Program												
Change in Authorization Level e/	0	20	20	20	20	20	0	0	0	0	80	100
Change in Outlays	0	20	20	20	20	20	0	0	0	0	80	100

Notes:

These estimates are preliminary and subject to change.

a/ Effective October 1, 2001, except elimination of time limit on eligibility for refugees and asylees effective April 1, 2000.

b/ Effective July 1, 2000.

c/ Based on discussion with staff. Excess shelter cap set at \$280 for FY 2000, \$340 for FY 2001, and indexed to the CPI-U beginning FY 2002.

d/ Less than \$500,000.

e/ Based on discussion with staff.

THE NATION'S NEWSPAPER



NO. 1 IN THE USA... FIRST IN DAILY READERS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1999

PAGE A1

Despite gains, hunger persists in USA

By Richard Willing
USA TODAY

ALBUQUERQUE — Families in 11 Southern and Western states face a "significantly" greater risk of going hungry than the rest of the nation, according to a Department of Agriculture report out today.

Though hunger is falling nationwide, as many as one in six households is hungry or surviv-

ing at near-hunger levels in a band of states that sweeps from Florida through New Mexico and Arizona to California and the Pacific Northwest.

The District of Columbia also had high rates of hunger and near-hunger.

Nationally, 3.5% of households were found to be hungry, and another 6.2% were at near-hunger levels.

In the "hunger" category, at

least one member of a household experienced hunger pangs once a month for at least three consecutive months.

"Hunger remains a persistent problem," Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said. "We need to understand more to better address it."

Critics of federal food programs said the report was designed to obscure the fact that the war on hunger is being won.

"There aren't enough hungry people to count anymore, and it's starting to concern them," said welfare opponent Heather Mac Donald of the Manhattan Institute.

Glickman said many Americans who suffer from hunger are retirees and families trying to subsist on \$5.15-an-hour minimum-wage jobs.

► 50-state list, 4A

States ranked by rates of hunger

An Agriculture Department report out today ranks states and the District of Columbia on the percentage of households whose occupants are hungry or near-hungry. New Mexico got the worst rating, 15.1%; North Dakota got the best, 4.6%. (Story, 1A)

N.M.	15.1%	N.Y.	10.0%	Ind.	7.8%
Miss.	14.0%	Kan.	9.9%	Vt.	7.7%
Texas	12.9%	Ga.	9.7%	Alaska	7.6%
Ariz.	12.8%	W.Va.	9.0%	Neb.	7.5%
La.	12.8%	Wyo.	9.0%	N.H.	7.4%
Ark.	12.6%	Colo.	8.8%	N.J.	7.3%
Ore.	12.6%	Conn.	8.8%	Wis.	7.2%
Okla.	11.9%	N.C.	8.8%	Md.	7.1%
Wash.	11.9%	Utah	8.8%	Pa.	7.1%
Fla.	11.5%	Maine	8.7%	Iowa	7.0%
Calif.	11.4%	R.I.	8.7%	Minn.	6.9%
Ala.	11.3%	Mo.	8.6%	Del.	6.8%
D.C.	11.1%	Nev.	8.6%	S.D.	6.4%
Tenn.	10.9%	Ohio	8.5%	Mass.	6.3%
Hawaii	10.4%	Ky.	8.4%	N.D.	4.6%
Mont.	10.2%	Va.	8.3%	U.S. average	9.7%
S.C.	10.2%	Ill.	8.2%	Source: Agriculture Department	
Idaho	10.1%	Mt. R.	8.1%		

HUNGER IN THE UNITED STATES

Food Stamps are the key to reducing hunger in millions of American homes.

- 76¢ per meal is the average Food Stamp benefit.
- 90% of Food Stamp recipients have income below the poverty line, and 40% of these people have income below half of the poverty line (eligibility is limited to 130% of poverty).
- 6.2% of the U.S. population, over 17 million people, are expected to receive Food Stamps each month during FY 2000 under current law. This is fully one third fewer Food Stamp participants than in 1995.
- 58.2% of all households receiving Food Stamps include children, and these households account for 81.7% of all Food Stamp spending. Children under 18 comprise one half of all Food Stamp recipients.
- 1.1% of the total FY 2000 budget, or about \$20 billion, supports the Food Stamp Program.
- *The Hunger Relief Act would provide about 2% more resources for the Food Stamp Program, increasing access for about 2 million of the nation's neediest people.*

Today children need greater access to Food Stamps.

- 1 in 5 U.S. children, almost 15 million total, is poor and lives in a family that receives Food Stamps.
- According to a July 1999 GAO study, the number of children living in poverty who receive Food Stamps dropped from 94.6% in 1995 to 84.1% in 1997. During 1997 alone, while the number of children living in poverty decreased by 350,000, the number of children receiving Food Stamps decreased by 1.3 million. GAO concludes, "children's participation in the Food Stamp Program has dropped more sharply than the number of children living in poverty, indicating a growing gap between need and assistance."
- While the Census Bureau reported no statistically significant change in the number of children under age 6 living in poverty between 1997 and 1998, during this same period USDA reports that hunger increased by over 10% in households with children under age 6.
- 3.3 million children lived in households that experienced hunger during 1998 according to USDA.
- 9.6 million children under age 12 are at risk of hunger according to the most comprehensive U.S. study on childhood hunger ever, the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project.
- USDA reports that in 1998, "households with children experienced food insecurity at more than double the rate for households without children (15.2 versus 7.2 percent)."
- 4.4% of U.S. households with children reported that their children were not eating enough in 1998 compared to 4.8% in 1995, and 1.6% reported cutting the size of children's meals, compared to 2% in 1995, according to the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey.
- 43% of emergency food clients are children age 17 or younger.

Today working families need greater access to Food Stamps.

- A person with one child who labors full time for today's minimum wage remains under the poverty line.
- 83% of a minimum-wage worker's income is required for an average rental unit in Pennsylvania.
- While participation in the Food Stamp Program declined 27% over the past 3.5 years, the number of people living in poverty declined only about 7%.
- The number of people living in poverty who do not receive Food Stamps grew by about 6 million (from 9 million to 15 million) between 1995 and 1998.
- 816,000 households experienced hunger in 1998, and were so poor that they would still be below the poverty line even if their income were to double.
- An Urban Institute study of former welfare recipients conducted in 1997 and 1998 concludes that 33% have to skip or cut meals due to lack of food.
- A December 1998 study of cities by the U.S. Conference of Mayors documents a 14% increase in requests for emergency food over the previous year. Over 35% of the households seeking help from food pantries and soup kitchens include an employed adult, according to independent studies by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Second Harvest, and Catholic Charities USA.

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106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION**S.** _____

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. SPECTER) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To restore food stamp benefits for aliens, to provide States with flexibility in administering the food stamp vehicle allowance, to index the excess shelter expense deduction to inflation, to authorize additional appropriations to purchase and make available additional commodities under the emergency food assistance program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the "Hunger Relief Act of
5 1999".

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1 **SEC. 2. RESTORATION OF FOOD STAMP BENEFITS FOR**
2 **ALIENS.**

3 (a) **LIMITED ELIGIBILITY OF QUALIFIED ALIENS**
4 **FOR CERTAIN FEDERAL PROGRAMS.—**

5 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 402(a) of the Per-
6 sonal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Rec-
7 onciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1612(a)) is
8 amended—

9 (A) in paragraph (2)—

10 (i) in subparagraph (A), by striking
11 “Federal programs” and inserting “Fed-
12 eral program”;

13 (ii) in subparagraph (D)—

14 (I) by striking clause (ii); and

15 (II) in clause (i)—

16 (aa) by striking “(i)
17 SSI.—” and all that follows
18 through “paragraph (3)(A)” and
19 inserting the following:

20 “(i) **IN GENERAL.**—With respect to
21 the specified Federal program described in
22 paragraph (3)”;

23 (bb) by redesignating sub-
24 clauses (II) through (IV) as
25 clauses (ii) through (iv) and in-
26 denting appropriately;

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- 1 (cc) by striking "subclause
2 (I)" each place it appears and in-
3 serting "clause (i)"; and
4 (dd) in clause (iv) (as redes-
5 ignated by item (bb)), by striking
6 "this clause" and inserting "this
7 subparagraph";
8 (iii) in subparagraph (E), by striking
9 "paragraph (3)(A) (relating to the supple-
10 mental security income program)" and in-
11 serting "paragraph (3)";
12 (iv) in subparagraph (F);
13 (I) by striking "Federal pro-
14 grams" and inserting "Federal pro-
15 gram";
16 (II) in clause (ii)(I)—
17 (aa) by striking "(I) in the
18 case of the specified Federal pro-
19 gram described in paragraph
20 (3)(A)."; and
21 (bb) by striking "; and" and
22 inserting a period; and
23 (III) by striking subclause (II);

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1 (v) in subparagraph (G), by striking
2 "Federal programs" and inserting "Fed-
3 eral program";

4 (vi) in subparagraph (II), by striking
5 "paragraph (3)(A) (relating to the supple-
6 mental security income program)" and in-
7 serting "paragraph (3)"; and

8 (vii) by striking subparagraphs (I),
9 (J), and (K); and
10 (B) in paragraph (3)—

11 (i) by striking "means any" and all
12 that follows through "The supplemental"
13 and inserting "means the supplemental";
14 and

15 (ii) by striking subparagraph (B).

16 (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section
17 402(b)(2)(F) of the Personal Responsibility and
18 Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8
19 U.S.C. 1612(b)(2)(F)) is amended by striking "sub-
20 section (a)(3)(A)" and inserting "subsection (a)(3)".

21 (b) FIVE-YEAR LIMITED ELIGIBILITY OF QUALIFIED
22 ALIENS FOR FEDERAL MEANS-TESTED PUBLIC BEN-
23 EFIT.—Section 403 of the Personal Responsibility and
24 Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C.
25 1613) is amended—

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1 (1) in subsection (c)(2), by adding at the end
2 the following:

3 "(1) Assistance or benefits under the Food
4 Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.);"
5 and

6 (2) in subsection (d)—

7 (A) by striking "not apply" and all that
8 follows through "(1) an individual" and insert-
9 ing "not apply to an individual"; and

10 (B) by striking "; or" and all that follows
11 through "402(a)(3)(B)".

12 (c) AUTHORITY FOR STATES TO PROVIDE FOR AT-
13 TRIBUTION OF SPONSOR'S INCOME AND RESOURCES TO
14 THE ALIEN WITH RESPECT TO STATE PROGRAMS.—Sec-
15 tion 422(b) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Op-
16 portunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1632(b))
17 is amended by adding at the end the following:

18 "(8) Programs comparable to assistance or ben-
19 efits under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C.
20 2011 et seq.).".

21 (d) REQUIREMENTS FOR SPONSOR'S AFFIDAVIT OF
22 SUPPORT.—Section 423(d) of the Personal Responsibility
23 and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8
24 U.S.C. 1183a note; Public Law 104-193) is amended by
25 adding at the end the following:

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1 “(12) Benefits under the Food Stamp Act of
2 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), if a sponsor is unable
3 to make the reimbursement because the sponsor ex-
4 periences hardship (including bankruptcy, disability,
5 and indigence) or if the sponsor experiences severe
6 circumstances beyond the control of the sponsor, as
7 determined by the Secretary of Agriculture.”.

8 (e) DERIVATIVE ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS.—Sec-
9 tion 436 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Oppor-
10 tunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1646) is re-
11 pealed.

12 (f) APPLICATION.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
14 graph (2), this section and the amendments made by
15 this section shall apply to assistance or benefits pro-
16 vided under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C.
17 2011 et seq.) for months beginning on or after Octo-
18 ber 1, 2001.

19 (2) REFUGEES AND ASYLEES.—In the case of
20 an alien described in section 402(a)(2)(A) of the
21 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Rec-
22 onciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1612(a)(2)(A)),
23 this section and the amendments made by this sec-
24 tion shall apply to assistance or benefits provided
25 under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2011

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1 et seq.) for months beginning on or after April 1,
2 2000.

3 **SEC. 3. VEHICLE ALLOWANCE.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5(g)(2) of the Food
5 Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2014(g)(2)) is amended—

6 (1) in subparagraph (B)(iv)—

7 (A) by striking “subparagraph (C)” and
8 inserting “subparagraphs (C) and (D)”; and

9 (B) by striking “to the extent that” and all
10 that follows through the end of the clause and
11 inserting “to the extent that the fair market
12 value of the vehicle exceeds \$4,650; and”; and
13 (2) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(D) **ALTERNATIVE VEHICLE ALLOW-**
15 **ANCE.** —If the vehicle allowance standards that
16 a State agency uses to determine eligibility for
17 assistance under the State program funded
18 under part A of title IV of the Social Security
19 Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) would result in a
20 lower attribution of resources to certain house-
21 holds than under subparagraph (B)(iv), in lieu
22 of applying subparagraph (B)(iv), the State
23 agency may elect to apply the State vehicle al-
24 lowance standards to all households that would

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1 incur a lower attribution of resources under the
2 State vehicle allowance standards.”.

3 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
4 this section take effect on July 1, 2000.

5 **SEC. 4. MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF EXCESS SHELTER EXPENSE**
6 **DEDUCTION.**

7 Section 5(e)(7)(B) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977
8 (7 U.S.C. 2014(e)(7)(B)) is amended by striking clauses
9 (iii) and (iv) and inserting the following:

10 “(iii) for fiscal year 1999, \$275,
11 \$478, \$393, \$334, and \$203 per month,
12 respectively;

13 “(iv) for fiscal year 2000, \$280, \$483,
14 \$398, \$339, and \$208 per month, respec-
15 tively;

16 “(v) for fiscal year 2001, \$340, \$543,
17 \$458, \$399, and \$268 per month, respec-
18 tively; and

19 “(vi) for fiscal year 2002 and each
20 subsequent fiscal year, the applicable
21 amount during the preceding fiscal year, as
22 adjusted to reflect changes for the 12-
23 month period ending the preceding Novem-
24 ber 30 in the Consumer Price Index for All
25 Urban Consumers published by the Bureau

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1 of Labor Statistics of the Department of
2 Labor.”.

3 SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR ADDI-
4 TIONAL COMMODITIES UNDER EMERGENCY
5 FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

6 Section 214 of the Emergency Food Assistance Act
7 of 1983 (7 U.S.C. 7515) is amended by adding at the end
8 the following:

9 “(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

10 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any other
11 funds that are made available to carry out this sec-
12 tion, there are authorized to be appropriated to pur-
13 chase and make available additional commodities
14 under this section \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal
15 years 2001 through 2005.

16 “(2) DIRECT EXPENSES.—Not less than 15
17 percent of the amount made available under para-
18 graph (1) shall be used to pay direct expenses (as
19 defined in section 204(a)(2)) incurred by emergency
20 feeding organizations to distribute additional com-
21 modities to needy persons.”.