

Partners to End Hunger

Eliminating hunger through advocacy, education and a commitment to healthy communities

2008 Session Re-cap State and Federal Policy Advancement

MINNESOTA

Food Shelf funding

[Representative John Benson](#), re-introduced a [bill](#) and introduced a new bill to increase state funding for food shelves this session. Benson called this his most important bill of the session.

There were several opportunities for testimony and along with Colleen Moriarty and Connie Greer, Michelle Rageth, the Executive Director of Friends in Need food shelf gave powerful testimony before the Housing Policy & Finance and Public Health Finance Committee.

The bill had great support from many lawmakers, the champions being: Clark, Benson, Rukavina

The Legislature has passed an appropriation for an additional \$500,000 emergency food shelf funding. 1st increase since 1995.

Food Support

DHS will delay implementation of 6-month reporting for food stamps to March 2009 (instead of May 2008). This means food stamp participants will continue to file paperwork with the state monthly until that time.

Commission to End Poverty

The Legislative Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota will be in business six months longer –thanks to language that moves its sunset from December this year to June next year. That will allow the members and the staff to introduce and advance their recommendations into the next legislative session. (The extension does not come with any increased funding for the Commission.)

Milk

State reimbursement for kindergarten milk was increased from 14 cents to 20 cents per carton. Because milk prices have increased sharply, this additional funding was needed to cover the actual cost to schools of providing a daily carton of milk to kindergarteners. The appropriation was increased by \$400,000 per year. This is a permanent increase.

FEDERAL

Farm Bill

FOOD SUPPORT

- Raises the minimum standard deduction (households with 1-3 members) from \$134 to \$144 in FY 2009 and indexes for inflation.
- Removes the cap on the dependent care deduction
- Raises the minimum benefit for 1 & 2 person households from \$10 to about \$14
- Puts a COLA into the current \$2,000 and \$3,000 asset limits. (Note MN has a \$7,000 asset limit through cat el)
- Excludes IRAs and tax-preferred retirement accounts
- Also excludes education savings accounts like 529s
- States may extend 12-month "simplified reporting" to households with seniors and people with disabilities (12 month reporting where people would only be required to report if their income rises above 130% FPG).
- New Food Stamp Program name - the "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" (SNAP).
- Allows food banks and other nonprofits to continue to engage in innovative Food Stamp Program outreach and enrollment activities

TEFAP

- An immediate infusion of \$50 million more for food in the current fiscal year – 2008; and a \$110 million increase for Fiscal Year 2009 that begins October 1, 2008.
- Increasing mandatory funding for entitlement food purchases from \$140 million to \$250 million annually, beginning in fiscal year 2009; *provision of \$250 million each year for food purchases indexed annually for food price inflation through fiscal year 2012;
- increasing the annual authorization level for TEFAP storage and distribution funding from \$60 million to \$100 million, though these funds are discretionary and must be sought annually through the appropriations process;
- Creation of a \$10 million a year program of Infrastructure and Transportation Grants to Support Rural Food Bank Delivery of Healthy Perishable Foods from fiscal year 2008 to 2012.

In related subject areas, the Farm Bill also:

- Creates a Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development Center to improve food access in underserved communities and funded at \$1 million in each of fiscal years 2009 through 2011, with a \$2 million authorization for fiscal year 2012
- Allows schools to specify a geographic preference for the procurement of unprocessed agricultural products that are locally grown and raised

- Aids rural businesses with financing for local food enterprises; and
 - Provides \$500,000 for a one-year study of “food deserts.”
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- Increasing annual mandatory funding for the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program from \$15 million to \$20.6 million;
 - Providing \$33 million over five years to increase the scope of the Farmers’ Market Promotion Program; and designating 10 percent of annual Farmers’ Market Promotion Program funding for the support of electronic benefits transfer (EBT) projects at farmers’ markets.
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- A new program authorized under the Farm Bill will take a 14-state pilot program that provides snacks of free fresh fruits and vegetables to children in schools to the national level, with programs in every state and the District of Columbia. By 2012, the effort will be funded at \$150 million per year – nearly eight times its current size.
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- The 2008 Farm Bill makes a number of changes in other programs, too. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which President Bush has proposed to eliminate, is continued and reauthorized through fiscal year 2012, with elderly persons getting equal status with women and children for access to the program.
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- Under the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), the U.S. Department of Agriculture is directed to conduct a survey of participants on their preference for traditional foods and also to report to Congress on the FDPIR food package.
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- Finally, the bill authorizes continuation of the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows Program and the Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellows Program through the Congressional Hunger Center. The two programs are currently funded at around \$2.5 million annually.