

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS

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Hunger Advocates Deliver Stories, Messages on Paper Plates to Congressional Offices
*Through paper plates, constituents urge Congress to protect nutrition programs
and the food insecure Ohioans in their districts*

COLUMBUS – “It helps me and my family because after rent and bills there just isn’t enough money for food.” That’s one of hundreds of messages written on paper plates by Ohioans who want their voices to be heard by members of Congress.

In the aftermath of a drawn-out government shutdown, representatives from the Ohio Association of Foodbanks will be delivering those plates over the next two weeks to congressional offices to thank those members who voted to end the shutdown, including Senator Brown, Senator Portman, Speaker Boehner and Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Joyce, Kaptur, Ryan, Stivers and Tiberi.

While the government shutdown has ended, additional threats to nutrition programs and the federal safety net remain at the forefront of the minds of hunger relief advocates. They urged Ohio’s congressional members to protect the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly called food stamps) and other nutrition programs as Farm Bill deliberations continue.

“Beyond the immediate concerns related to the continuing effects of the shutdown on low-income Ohioans, we are deeply concerned about threats of cuts and changes to SNAP,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. “Unfortunately, some members of Congress continue to attack this highly effective program based on a handful of sensationalized stories rather than the more than 1.8 million Ohioans who can’t afford to feed themselves and their families on their own.”

The program—designed to ensure basic nutrition for children, seniors, people with disabilities, working families and adults struggling with unemployment—has already undergone a change in Ohio that could result in thousands of low-income adults losing basic nutrition assistance. The State of Ohio recently elected to forego a waiver extended by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that, due to a continued labor surplus in the state, would have allowed unemployed childless adults to continue to receive modest SNAP benefits.

Instead, the State of Ohio elected to impose work requirements on those adults in all but 16 rural counties. Unemployed childless adults unable to secure employment will have to secure a slot in a work experience program provided by their county, or face losing their benefits altogether.

Additionally, beginning November 1, Ohioans receiving SNAP will experience across-the-board reductions in their benefits thanks to the expiration of benefit increases established by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. For an average family of four, the cuts will mean around \$36 less per month in food assistance.

“We are experiencing a compounding crisis in the world of hunger relief,” said Hamler-Fugitt. “We urge Ohio’s congressional delegation to consider the paper plate messages we are delivering as they work to make government spending decisions. Ohioans living paycheck to paycheck and on the brink of hunger cannot afford to make any more sacrifices.”

The association thanks Ohio congressional members who voted **for** the spending bill that brought the government shutdown to an end and urges them to work toward a Farm Bill that makes no cuts or harmful structural changes to federal nutrition assistance programs:

- Senator Sherrod Brown
- Senator Rob Portman
- Speaker John Boehner
- Representative Joyce Beatty
- Representative Marcia Fudge
- Representative David Joyce
- Representative Marcy Kaptur
- Representative Tim Ryan
- Representative Pat Tiberi
- Representative Steve Stivers

The association urges the Ohio congressional members who voted **against** the spending bill that ended the shutdown to take up support for a Farm Bill that makes no cuts or harmful structural changes to federal nutrition assistance programs:

- Representative Steve Chabot
- Representative Bob Gibbs
- Representative Bill Johnson
- Representative Jim Jordan
- Representative Robert Latta
- Representative Jim Renacci
- Representative Michael Turner
- Representative Brad Wenstrup

About the Ohio Association of Foodbanks

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,300 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. In SFY 2013, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 173 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#), and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

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