

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 20, 2013

Majority of Congressional Members Out of Touch With Average Ohioans, Prevalence of Hunger

Media Statement from Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks:

“On behalf of the more than 1.85 million Ohioans accessing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) benefits to feed themselves and their families, I want to thank Congresswoman Joyce Beatty and Congresswoman Marcia Fudge for co-sponsoring Rep. McGovern’s amendment to restore the proposed \$20.5 billion in cuts to SNAP during recent Farm Bill debate. Representatives Beatty and Fudge continue to fight for the children, seniors, people with disabilities and working poor who simply cannot afford adequate, nutritious food on their limited and shrinking incomes. I also want to thank Representatives David Joyce, Marcy Kaptur and Tim Ryan for voting in support of the amendment.

“As cited in The Washington Post, the median net worth of Congress rose 5 percent during the recession while it fell 39 percent for the average American. The wealthiest one-third of lawmakers saw their net worth rise 14 percent. Congressional members are compensated \$174,000 annually, while the median household income in Ohio in 2011 was just \$45,749. Clearly, these disparities reflect what we are now seeing in proposed SNAP policy during Farm Bill debate: Congress is out of touch with the people they represent.

“Many harmful SNAP amendments were proposed that would have weakened the entire state of Ohio. These cuts would increase and exacerbate the prevalence of food insecurity, which already affects nearly one in five Ohioans, including more than one in four children. They would decrease educational achievement for our children, decrease productivity for our low-wage workers, and increase the likelihood of chronic illness and disease. They would damage our local economies and lead to increased health care costs for every Ohioan.

“The defeat of the House Farm Bill today isn’t a solution, but a step in the process as we fight to end hunger and prevent cuts to nutrition programs. We won a hard fight today, in pushing back on a bill that would have destroyed a highly efficient program that puts food on the tables of our most vulnerable. We still have a long fight ahead. As the House goes back to the drawing board on their version of the Farm Bill, I urge our congressional delegation to get back in touch with the issues facing real Ohioans. I urge them to follow the leadership of Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Kaptur, Joyce and Ryan by voting against any bill that would damage the integrity of this proven and vital nutrition assistance program. Keep Ohioans in grocery store lines instead of in our food pantry and soup kitchen lines.”

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Lisa Hamler-Fugitt is available for interviews with the media to underscore the need to protect the integrity of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps). To arrange an interview with Lisa, please contact her at 614-271-4803 or lisa@ohiofoodbanks.org.

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 2012, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 164 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.

Contact: Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks at 614-221-4336 ext. 222 or 614-271-4803 (cell) or lisa@ohiofoodbanks.org