

Farm Bill Healthier US Nutrition Forum

Farm Bill Reauthorization Testimony

October 25, 2005

Under Secretary Bost and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding the 2007 Farm Bill Reauthorization and the role of federal nutrition programs.

My name is Ruby Jonsrud and I am a current food stamp recipient. Food stamps have provided my family with a more holistic choice of foods than I would otherwise be able to purchase. I am a student at Marylhurst University, a year away from attaining a master's degree in Gerontology. I work two part-time jobs in an effort to maintain my household needs. I did not, until about 6 months ago, realize that I could apply for food stamps while attending school and the difference in what I could provide for my son and myself was dramatically improved with the addition of the 278 food stamp dollars per month that I receive as assistance.

More and more, as we move into the future and redefine "family" and household, it becomes import to reevaluate what constitutes need and eligibility. It is so important to the success of families to be able to receive assistance while struggling to attain independence. For my family, the food stamp program is a helping hand during a time while I am completing education that will allow me to contribute to society in a significant way, and this is what it is meant to be, in my estimation. While I am confident that my family will wean away from this assistance in the near future, I am so grateful that it is available now, so that I can remain in the educational system and complete the training that will allow me to become a valuable resource for others.

The recommendations that Angela Martin has made to this committee reflect the needs of the changing families and are necessary to the success and growth of the food stamp program as a tool in assisting the education and movement toward independence and contribution of all the recipients. From a personal and societal standpoint I would add my voice to them and ask for their consideration and adoption from this committee.

Thank you for allowing me to testify and add my voice to this forum.