

FOOD STAMP BOOST AND OTHER KEY BENEFITS INCLUDED IN SENATE AND HOUSE ECONOMIC RECOVERY LEGISLATION: YOUR CALLS NEEDED TODAY

Breaking News: Yesterday, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert Byrd (D-WV) unveiled a \$56.2 billion economic recovery package that includes a temporary boost in food stamp benefits. “We must not forget Main Street as we work to address the crisis on Wall Street. Democrats believe that we must urgently pass another economic recovery package that will create hundreds of thousands of good-paying American jobs and prevent cuts in critical services for millions of Americans,” said Senate Majority Leader Reid in a press release. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) today unveiled the House’s package which includes \$2.6 billion to address rising food costs for seniors, people with disabilities and very poor families with children along with other key human needs program investments (details still emerging).

Key provisions of the Senate bill include a 10 percent increase in Food Stamp benefits through FY09, at a cost of \$5 billion; \$450 million for the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); \$50 million for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP); \$30 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP); \$60 million to help senior meals programs; \$172 million to assist with Farm Bill implementation costs; \$5.1 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); an extension in unemployment benefits for seven weeks; and state fiscal relief. For highlights of the legislation go to: <http://frac.org/pdf/ReidByrdstimulus.pdf>

What’s Next?

Both the House and Senate will take up differing economic recovery bills today. There is the possibility that Congress could adjourn by this weekend without passing these critical economic investments, but we need to reinforce as strongly as possible that such benefits must be part of a package now or right after the election. 60 votes are needed to pass the bill in the Senate.

Take Action: Call your Members of Congress today, especially your Senators, and urge them to pass economic recovery legislation before they adjourn that particularly includes a much needed temporary boost in food stamp benefits and other economic recovery investments that will help hard-hit, low-income families.

Use 1-800-473-6711* to call your Members of Congress.

For a discussion of why a food stamp boost is so badly needed and is such effective stimulus, go to www.realstimulus.org.

Resources:

If Congress doesn't act, 28.6 million people who now receive Food Stamps will be stuck at about \$1 per meal, despite skyrocketing food costs. To see how many in your state: http://www.frac.org/data/FSPparticipation/2008_06.pdf#page=2

For background on the toll rising food prices are taking on low-income Americans, go to <http://www.frac.org/pdf/thriftyfoodplan.pdf>

For feedback and/or technical assistance, contact eteller@frac.org or evollinger@frac.org

*This toll-free number is provided courtesy of the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization which works for economic justice and peace (www.afsc.org). AFSC welcomes groups to circulate and use the number in support of non-partisan work for policies that benefit the common good and without linking the alert to a website soliciting donations or actions which may be used to support partisan lobbying or work.