



June 12, 2013

The Honorable Frank Wolf
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Representative Wolf:

I want to take this opportunity to commend you for your support over the years of domestic anti-hunger programs. Your leadership and long standing advocacy for programs that help support struggling Americans has made a difference in the lives of millions of low income Americans. We welcome your efforts to encourage a dialogue on how to reduce food insecurity in America, and the role that innovative policies to encourage public private partnerships can play in reducing hunger in America.

Feeding America strongly encourages bipartisan cooperation in Congress to address domestic hunger. Nearly 50 million Americans live in households that struggle to put food on the table. Federal nutrition programs provide an important safety net for millions of Americans struggling with food insecurity, yet there are many Americans who are food insecure who do not qualify for assistance from federal programs. For those families, food banks and other charities are essential. While it is critically important to protect and strengthen the public-private anti-hunger safety net, we can all agree that we must also work to address the underlying causes of hunger and identify innovative solutions that lessen the need and help families achieve self-sufficiency.

Feeding America is the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity with a network of more than 200 food banks serving over 37 million people across all 50 states, through over 61,000 local food assistance agencies, more than 55 percent of which are faith-based. Feeding America food banks as well as our partner food assistance agencies rely on a variety of public and private funding streams to meet the need in local communities across America.

Feeding America partners each year with federal and local government as well as with numerous food industry donors to implement innovative programs to address hunger and reduce need for food assistance. Reducing hunger is a public private partnership, and Feeding America is committed to continued engagement with Congress, the Administration and the private sector to maximize our combined efforts to combat hunger.

In light of tremendous need, any commission charged with identifying opportunities to strengthen the nutrition safety net must ensure that such efforts are undertaken with thoughtfulness and careful deliberation. Our ultimate goal must be to reduce the need for food assistance and deliver adequate

benefits efficiently to those in need. As such, we respectfully offer the following principles to guide the proposed commission's work:

Benefit Adequacy—Programs must provide resources sufficient to meet the nutritional needs of participants and any savings from greater efficiencies should be reinvested in improving benefit adequacy.

Participation—Programs should be designed and implemented in ways that promote participation by all eligible clients; savings should not be achieved by reducing eligibility or imposing access barriers.

Program Coordination—Enrollment in nutrition assistance programs should be streamlined and integrated where possible with enrollment in other Federal programs serving low-income people, and eligibility rules should be consistent across programs.

Program Delivery—Nutrition programs work together to weave a comprehensive safety net and no one program is intended to meet the needs of all populations. Federal nutrition programs have been developed to respond to identified nutritional needs of specific populations or to reach eligible people in settings not addressed by other existing programs.

Program Administration—Efforts to eliminate inefficiencies and streamline program administration play a key role and must be examined.

Data-Driven—Any changes to nutrition assistance programs, including those intended to eliminate duplication and inefficiency, must be data-driven and undertaken only after careful study and analysis of the potential impact on benefit levels, eligibility, and participation.

Stakeholder Input—Recommendations should be developed in collaboration with stakeholder input from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, including those responsible for administering programs at the federal and state level and those providing delivery of services and benefits to low-income families at the local level.

Hunger hits every community in America, and the need for food assistance is projected to remain high for several years to come. We support your goal of building Congressional commitment to addressing food insecurity and leveraging bipartisan, public-private cooperation to strengthen current efforts. We urge you to ensure that such changes are made carefully and with the goal of improving service delivery, increasing program access, and maximizing all available resources so that together we may end hunger and food insecurity in America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EO', with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

Eric Olsen
Senior Vice President of Government Relations