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NEWS

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STRONG SUPPORT OF FARM BILL NEEDED AS PRESIDENT BUSH THREATENS TO VETO

LEXINGTON— This week the House and Senate passed the final Farm Bill conference report. This important legislation includes significant funding to help hungry families in central and eastern Kentucky through emergency food assistance, Food Stamp Program reform and much more.

This piece of legislation will have significant impact on the hungry families struggling daily in central and eastern Kentucky. Through this bill, funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) will move from \$190 million in 2008 to \$250 million next year. TEFAP is a means-tested program, with income eligibility requirements set by the states, typically between 100 and 155 percent of the federal poverty threshold. Recipients include many vulnerable populations, including the elderly, children, working families, and the homeless.

President Bush is threatening to veto the bill, leaving millions of food-insecure Americans without an opportunity for federal food support. Food banks like God's Pantry Food Bank rely on federal funding to support programs to feed hungry families, including senior citizens, single mothers and children.

Hungry Americans and our food bank continue to face very, very difficult times. America's Second Harvest – the Nation's Food Bank Network – recently completed a survey regarding local impact during this economic downturn. Of the food banks who participated in the survey, 99 percent of respondents reported an estimated 15-20 percent average increase in the number of people they are serving today compared to one year ago. More than 90 percent of the respondents cited increasing food and fuel

prices as a primary factor driving the increases in need. Other factors included inadequate food stamp benefits, unemployment, underemployment, and rent or mortgage costs.

God's Pantry Food Bank, which has seen an average 30 percent increase in those seeking service over the last year, is urging the community to remain active by contacting their state senators and representatives. Even though the House and Senate votes indicated a strong level of support for the Farm Bill, citizens must make sure that the Members of Congress who voted in favor of the Farm Bill also vote to override the President's veto should that happen. With rising food and gas prices and an economic downturn affecting both middle- and low- income Americans, hunger relief is needed today.

Concerned citizens can make a call today to urge their Congressperson to continue to back the Farm Bill against a Presidential veto:

To reach House members, call the House switchboard at 202.225.3121.

To reach Senators, call the Senate switchboard at 202.224.3121.

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The mission of God's Pantry Food Bank is to reduce hunger in Kentucky through community cooperation making the best possible use of all available resources. We serve 49 counties of central and eastern Kentucky and distribute \$10 worth of food for every \$1 donated. Last year, God's Pantry Food Bank and its member agencies distributed more than 13 million pounds of groceries to more than 159,000 individuals. God's Pantry Food Bank is a member of America's Second Harvest, the Nation's Food Bank Network. Through community partnerships and distribution of food to 50,000 agencies, America's Second Harvest collectively works to assure that people in need have access to a balanced diet. For more information visit us at <http://www.godspantry.org/> or www.secondharvest.org

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