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NORTH TEXAS FOOD BANK LEADERSHIP ADVOCATE FOR HUNGER RELIEF PROGRAMS ON CAPITOL HILL

DALLAS (March 7, 2018) – On Tuesday February 27th, representatives from the North Texas Food Bank travelled to Washington D.C. to take their message over the future of the Farm Bill to Capitol Hill- leaving with good news for North Texans.

Concerns over federal feeding programs in the President's budget included a proposed 30% reduction in funding for SNAP (formally food stamps) and the elimination of the senior feeding program CSFP, known locally as the People and Nutrition Program (PAN). President and CEO, Trisha Cunningham and NTFB board member - Bill Hogg, Government Relations Director - Valerie Hawthorne, and Senior Manager of Communications - Diana Carranza, met with the offices of 10 members of Congress, as well as the House Committee on Agriculture, to communicate the importance of federal feeding programs in North Texas- and to ask for support in protecting these safety net initiatives.

Programs like SNAP, TEFAP, CSFP, and SNAP-ED are responsible for providing 54% of the meals that NTFB distributes provides access to each year. As leaders in the fight against hunger, we believe it is our duty to defend and protect these vital programs from any threats- as these are critical components of our support to our partner agencies and the clients we serve together.

NTFB leaders left the meetings feeling optimistic about future support from our elected officials. Many offices showed their commitment to helping continue these critical feeding programs and most said "no" to the concept of the much debated "SNAP/Harvest boxes." This left field proposal idea uses half of the clients' monthly benefit funds to deliver pantry staples to SNAP households who receive more than \$90 each month. NTFB leadership stressed to officials that logistical difficulties and exorbitant costs alone would make this idea unfeasible, as it would take years for food banks and other hunger relief organizations to grow the capacity to support that would fall onto local food banks and other hunger relief organizations, should the "Harvest Box" idea be approved.

Our message was specific, targeted, and truly resonated with our elected officials. However, we know our fight is far from over. The next step will come in a few weeks when House Agriculture Chairman Conaway releases his mark of the Farm Bill - the bill that contains the funding for these federal feeding programs. When meeting with the House Committee on Agriculture, they revealed that we might be pleasantly surprised. For the sake of North Texas, and the clients we serve, we hope that we are.