

Advocacy Update 9.18.2018

Hurricane Florence

Flooding damages the poultry industry

Sanderson Farms in the Carolina's said Monday that about 1.7 million chickens had been killed by flooding at contractor farms in the state, and another 30 farms housing a combined 6.3 million birds were surrounded by floodwaters and couldn't be reached by feed trucks.

CHIP

Budget cuts to CHIP will NOT impact current or future participants

The Children's Health Insurance Program received a budget cut of \$7.7 Billion dollars in the Senate's final fiscal year 2019 funding package. The money taken from the program will have no affect on the program itself and is for accounting purposes only. These are unused and unspent funds and the cut will allow appropriators extra money to award to other programs. Rumors about the cut are likely to hit but be assured that both parties have stressed it will not affect current or future program participants.

Federal Funding for Weekend Backpacks

The Weekends Without Hunger Act seeks to generate a new federal feeding program

Congresswoman Diane Titus (NV) has drafted a bill that would allow USDA commodities to be used in weekend backpack programs nationwide. I met with her office while I was in DC to express my thoughts on her proposed bill. I see much potential in it as well as a few pitfalls, such as USDA commodities typically do not come in small kid sized packaging or offer a variety of kid friendly foods. Her office hopes incorporate this bill into the next Child Nutrition Re-authorization and we will continue working together on it.

City of Dallas Grants

City of Dallas grants will soon be available for the purchase of refrigerators for our partner agencies

The Economic Development Department at the City of Dallas will be putting together grant opportunities to advance food security in food desert areas. The opportunities mentioned included digging irrigation lines to water community gardens, clearing land for urban agriculture, or retrofitting corner stores for healthy food access. I asked if the purchase of refrigerators to store milk, eggs, and produce would be within the confines of the grant and the reply was "certainly". The opportunity has not been developed or issued yet but I will continue to stay on top of it.

New Food Assessment Map

Dallas Hunger Fighting partners, including NTFB, have come together and created an interactive Food Assessment Map of the City of Dallas. Instructions are located on the page. The map will allow users to overlay health, grocery access, demographic, and hunger outreach to selected zip codes. Check it out here: <http://dallashungersolutions.org/dallas-community-food-assessment-map/>

A Grand Opening

Elected Officials who serve our new PFC joining together

The Perot Family Campus Grand Opening successfully brought together elected officials for our City, County, State, and Federal offices. Mayor Harry LaRosiliere of Plano, State Senator Van Taylor, and a representative from Congressman Sam Johnson's office were all in attendance Sunday, and the Collin County Commissioner's Court issued a proclamation for us on Monday. Having their support will be critical as we move towards our 2019 policy priority agenda.



Farm Bill

Chances of there being a Farm Bill by the end of the year are unlikely

House and Senate leaders have not advanced in putting together a final bill before its expires on September 30th. Funding for the bill would remain in place until December 31st and after that an extension would need to be filed. However, the 4 main Congressional leaders of the Conference Committee do not feel this would be needed, though their optimism is not echoed by other members of the conference committee.



Last week I went to Capitol Hill in DC with other advocates from the Feeding America Network to talk with the offices of our Members of Congress (Reps. Hensarling, Ratcliffe, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Sessions, and Senator Cornyn) about the importance of TEFAP and the protection of SNAP. Below you will see a chart of House vs Senate versions of the bills and the positions we are supporting.

Program	House	Senate	Position
SNAP		X	NTFB supports helping people who can work and who can access work, back to work. However, the changes to the SNAP work requirements in the House Bill do not represent reasonable and sensible changes to current policy. The House Bill requires benefits to be renewed every 30 days for adults aged 18-59 with children older than 6, which would result in unworkable an administrative burden to state agencies
SNAP Employment & Training		X	NTFB supports the expansion of pilots featured in the Senate Bill that provide job training to SNAP recipients to new states, with a focus on populations underserved by traditional employment & training programs.

			The House Bill mandates untested programs at a significant cost.
SNAP-Education		X	NTFB supports the Senate provisions pertaining to SNAP-Education. We utilize SNAP Ed dollars to improve the nutritional quality and health outcomes of low income individuals in their communities through our nutrition education programming.
TEFAP	X		The House Bill provides level funding for TEFAP food purchases and NTFB supports keeping this program strong for the 16 million food insecure individuals who do not qualify for SNAP. The Senate Bill funds this vital program at \$291M less than the House Bill.
CSFP	X	X	Both bills support the lengthening of the certification length within CSFP. Seniors are typically on a fixed income, thereby their eligibility in this program is not fluctuating enough to need to re-apply often. This lessens the administrative burden on states and eligible senior citizens.

More to come next week, since this update is already quite long!

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