

Advocacy Update 11.01.2018

Good afternoon! Hope everyone had a fun and safe Halloween. At my house we passed out 2400 pieces of candy in 3 hours!! It was a blast and a wonderful sight.

Below is your advocacy update for these past few weeks. The upcoming election is at the forefront, as well as our network ask to USDA for increased funds, and a plan to help our seniors access SNAP benefits.

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November 6, 2018 Election is here

At the State level 15 out of the 31 State Senate seats and all 150 State House members are on the ballot. Texas will also have a new Speaker of the House to replace retired Joe Strauss. With many “purple districts” on the ballot (states that voted Democrat that typically vote Republican during the 2016 general election, or vice versa), many districts at the federal and state level are up in the air.

At the congressional level in Texas District 32, the Incumbent Rep. Pete Sessions (R), the civil rights attorney Colin Allred (D), and Melina Baker (L) are running to represent this traditionally Republican district which voted for Clinton (D) in 2016. This heated race has made Ballotpedia’s top 15 nationwide elections to watch.

Early voting ends Friday. If you would like to vote, please make sure you bring your picture ID.

Between November 7th and December 31st NTFB will be scheduling to meet with the offices of as many of our 37 state legislators as possible during this critical period. Once the 140 day long legislative session begins in January, reaching our busy state elected officials proves difficult.

Trade Mitigation

On October 30th, Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, and Congressman Will Hurd sent a letter to USDA Secretary, Sonny Perdue, urging financial support for all 21 food banks in Texas. Increased storage and delivery costs are a consequence to the arrival of these unexpected bonus items. As a reminder the bonus items have come about due to the Administration’s trade mitigation purchases from struggling American farmers, intended to offset the escalating trade war with China.

At NTFB, the first round of four truck loads of food will cost a significant amount to store and distribute. However, we are grateful to be able to have our new Perot Family Campus facility to accept these bonus items. The unexpected but nutritious USDA foods greatly increases the variety of products that will be available to distribute to our partner agencies and get to those in need.

Elderly Simplified (SNAP) Application Program

The USDA has a state waiver that allows states to generate a shorter, simplified Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Application for seniors applying and renewing their food benefits. Texas hunger fighting groups are making this concept a priority this session, along with other groups that support seniors. Other states have implemented this waiver and have had great success recruiting and keeping seniors in need in the program longer. With seniors typically on a fixed income and not going through many life changes, allowing for a renewal of benefits every 24 months instead of every 6 months reduces administrative paperwork and cost to the state.

NTFB, along with other groups will be talking with the Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC) to see if they are willing to do this waiver unilaterally, and how much of what we're asking for already maps onto their existing policy plans. If the response of HHSC is not within the bounds of our requests, we will pursue a united piece of state legislation, assuming we can find a legislator to champion the cause.



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