

NTFB VOICE Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS



March Newsletter

Federal News

Another government shutdown was averted during the first week of March when Congress passed and the President signed a bipartisan package of six fiscal year 2024 (FY24) appropriations bills, including the United States Department of Agriculture, which are now funded through the remainder of FY24 (October 2024).

The good news is mandatory programs Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) food purchases and child nutrition programs were fully funded at required levels. The discretionary programs were funded as follows:

- Women, Infants and Children (WIC) \$7 billion
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program for Seniors (CSFP) \$389 million
- TEFAP Storage and Distribution \$80 million (down 13% from FY23 funding of \$92 million).
- Community Projects funding for Food Banks \$28 million.



Congress has until March 22 to pass the six remaining appropriations bills to avoid a government shutdown. They are already beginning the process of working on the FY25 appropriations budget. More to come on this!

On March 6, the day the House approved the Agriculture Appropriations bill, almost 200 people from Feeding America Network food banks and Partner Agencies were on Capitol Hill meeting with their representatives.

I was joined by (left to right) Erica Yaeger, Chief External Affairs Officer, NTFB; Angelyn Page, Food Pantry Coordinator, **Aunt Bette's Community Pantry**; Laurel Stanley Abihabib, Chief Program Officer at **Network of Community Ministries**; Kelvin Browning, Director of Community Pantry, **Aunt Bette's Community Pantry**; Funmilayo Adeyemi, President of **Hope for You**; Devyn Buschow, Parish Relations Program Manager at **Catholic Charities**; Madeline Kissing, a Baylor University student and former NTFB Young Advocate; Ginny Kissing, NTFB Board Vice Chair and Global President & COO of Ryan.

We were able to divide and conquer meetings with staff of our two U.S. Senators Ted Cruz and John Cornyn and the 10 members of Congress whose districts are part of the North Texas Food Banks service area. Those include Colin Allred (District 32), Michael C. Burgess (District 26), Jasmine Crockett (District 30), Jake Ellzey (District 6), Pat Fallon (District 4), Lance Gooden (District 5), Ronny Jackson (District 13), Beth Van Duyne (District 24), Marc Veasey (District 33) and Keith Self (District 3). Our Agency Partners told their representatives why strong federal nutrition programs are important to the constituents in their district and about the challenges their neighbors are facing every day.

In the afternoon, with the House about to vote on the Appropriations bill, the staff from Congresswoman Jasmie Crockett's office escorted us to the House Democrat Cloakroom to meet with her. Located just off the House Floor, it was established in 1857 as a storage space for Members of Congress to store coats, hats, and umbrellas. Today it serves as a place for members to socialize, have a snack and prepare to vote. Reserved only for the members and their staff, it was very special for our group to meet with her there.



Left to right, Kenndey Hill, Tarrant Area Food Bank, Jamie Olson, Feeding Texas, Kelvin Browning, Aunt Bette's Community Pantry, Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett, Angelyn Page, Aunt Bette's Community Pantry, Clarissa Clarke, NTFB, Jared Williams, Tarrant Area Food Bank.

Another group was given a private tour of the Capitol by an intern Jonathan Olmos, an intern in Congressman Colin Allred's office, who grew up in North Texas.

Left to right, Laurel Stanley Abihab, the Network of Community Pantries, Funmilayo Adeyemi, Hope for You, Erica Yaeger, NTFB, Johnathan Olmos, Angelyn Page and Kelvin Browning, Aunt Bette's Community Pantry and Devyn Buschow Catholic Charities.



You never know who you will run into on a busy day on Capitol Hill!



Madeline and Ginny Kissling with Congressman Lance Gooden.



Our group ran into Congressman Keith Self at the Longworth House Office Building entrance.



It was a successful trip, and we were very happy to have leaders from some of our Partner Agencies come with us! If you want to find out a little more, you can read our blog [here](#).

You may have noticed, there has been no mention of the Farm Bill. In every meeting we asked when we would see a draft of the Farm Bill. Unfortunately, no one had an answer. Leadership of both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees have stated that they are committed to drafting a strong Farm Bill and want to get it right. More to come...

With Congressman Marc Veasey, whose district covers both the NTFB and Tarrant Area Food Bank service area.

Clarissa Clarke, Government Relations Officer