

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

An Overview

BREAD FOR THE WORLD'S 2018

OFFERING OF LETTERS:
FOR SUCH A
TIME AS THIS

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Every day, millions of people in the United States and around the world feed and support their families in part because of lifesaving programs funded by our government. We are making progress toward the end of hunger, but we live in challenging times. Our gains are increasingly vulnerable due to the actions and inactions of governing officials.

Our great democracy gives all Americans access to powerful decision makers. Just as Esther in the Old Testament was called to be an advocate with the king of Persia for her threatened people, we are called to speak up with leaders in Congress to protect vital programs for people who struggle with hunger and poverty. We must call on our leaders to ensure that all people, regardless of where they live, have the opportunity to reach their God-given potential.

The actions that Congress takes have far-reaching impact on the lives of millions of people in the United States and around the world living in hunger. The federal budget is the investment of our tax dollars. This investment must reflect our nation's priorities and values.

You serve God when you put your faith into practice. And just as Esther fasted and prayed as she prepared for advocacy with the king, the people and churches who participate in Bread for the World's annual Offering of Letters also pray for God's saving presence and direction in our nation's life.

Investments to End Hunger

Globally, hunger and poverty rates have been cut in half over the last 25 years. But in 2016, for the first time since the turn of the century, the number of people living in hunger increased, and now stands at 815 million. Funding for international hunger programs is under threat and we must work to get it back on track.

In the United States, 1 in 8 Americans lives at risk of hunger, including approximately 13 million children. Hunger rates have been declining since 2011, yet many Americans still struggle to put food on the table. We know how to end hunger. Food assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Women, Infant, Children (WIC) nutrition program, and school meals keep hunger at bay for millions of vulnerable Americans. Studies show that they also help children do better in school and in life.



To access the full toolkit, visit bread.org/ol



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Job training and tax credits give low-income workers the tools and incentives they need to move themselves out of poverty. Putting our tax dollars toward policies and programs that have been tested and proven to increase opportunity is critical to ending hunger and poverty.

The Budget Landscape

Last year, the faithful and persistent advocacy of you and other Bread for the World members helped stop devastating cuts to Medicaid and SNAP. Congress fully funded key hunger and poverty programs in the United States and around the world, and due to high-level advocacy during a critical moment, also provided an additional \$1 billion for famine relief.

In 2018, the Congress will once again target vital domestic and international anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs for deep cuts. Bread stands with you and people of faith across the United States to remind Congress through the Offering of Letters that we must respond to Jesus' call to help those most in need.

By raising your voice through Bread for the World's 2018 Offering of Letters: For Such a Time as This, you can urge Congress to invest in programs and support policies that help improve the lives of men, women, and children struggling with hunger in the United States and around the world.

What Congress Must Do

Every year, Congress approves budgets and policies that impact men, women, and children living with hunger and poverty in real and significant ways. Congress passes federal budget resolutions that set yearly spending levels and longer-term priorities such as immigration policy and tax policy. Congress must also pass the annual appropriations bills that fund all government programs, including international assistance as well as child nutrition and job training programs here in the United States.

Again this year, Bread for the World's network of churches and concerned people are asking Congress to protect the funding for key programs that provide hope and opportunity for people living with hunger.

PROGRAMS THAT INVEST IN PEOPLE AND OVERCOME HUNGER AND POVERTY

The government programs that help people living with hunger include:

- **Nutrition programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infant and Children (WIC) nutrition program, and school meals** provide millions of low-income children and families with nutritious food. SNAP alone kept 3.6 million Americans out of poverty in 2016.
- **Tax credits for low-income workers**, such as the earned income tax credit and child tax credit, do more to reduce hunger and poverty and encourage work than any other government program. In 2016, these tax credits moved 8.2 million people in the United States out of poverty.
- **Humanitarian relief programs** provide lifesaving assistance following natural and man-made disasters. In South Sudan, for example, these programs have provided food and other assistance that have saved lives and reduced suffering.
- **International poverty-focused development assistance** improves nutrition, provides access to safe water and sanitation, and helps struggling farm families increase production and income. Today, fewer children around the world are dying and more are thriving than ever before, partly due to our nation's investments in nutrition and agriculture programs.

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HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.