



# Advocacy Alert

OREGON FOOD BANK  
OREGON HUNGER RELIEF TASK FORCE

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## take five

(actions that take five minutes or less)

### Action:

As the House budget moves to the floor, please call your Representative to vote against the budget resolution. Toll free number: 1-800-459-1887.

### Message:

- ✓ Oppose the budget as it currently stands. It includes substantial cuts in domestic spending and threaten essential public programs.
- ✓ Support efforts to restore funding for domestic discretionary programs.

### Take Action with ease...

[www.oregonfoodbank.org](http://www.oregonfoodbank.org)



ADVOCATE



## Legislative Yellow Pages

**State Legislative Information**  
1-800-332-2313 (outside Salem)  
(503) 986-1000 (in Salem)  
[www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide](http://www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide)

**Federal Legislative Contacts**  
Rep. Wu (District 1)  
(503) 326-2901  
Rep. Walden (District 2)  
(541) 776-4646  
Rep. Blumenauer (District 3)  
(503) 231-2300  
Rep. DeFazio (District 4)  
(541) 465-6732  
Rep. Hooley (District 5)  
(503) 588-9100  
Senator Smith  
(503) 326-3386  
Senator Wyden  
(503) 326-7525

## What do we want Oregon, and the rest of America, to look like five years from now?

This question is at the heart of the debate over the FY 2007 federal budget.

Under the budget package the President sent to Congress last month, families across Oregon would be under more financial stress and face considerable economic challenges simply trying to make ends meet.

Every year, the President and Congress make budget decisions that impact each of us. The federal budget is a reflection of our values and priorities. What are the priorities for our budgetary expenditures? How do we value families? How do we value education? How do we value the hard-working people who make up the fabric of our communities? Unfortunately, the priorities currently outlined in the President's FY 2007 budget and under consideration in Congress

would put us on the wrong track.

Instead of making it a priority to help every infant and toddler receive the nutrition assistance needed, the Administration proposes deep cuts to the highly successful Women, Infants and Children program. Over the next five years, Oregon would receive \$30.7 million less, meaning 6,100 women and young children would be denied nutritional support.

Instead of making sure that every elderly person has enough to eat, the President proposes eliminating the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which provides modest food packages to 1,000 Oregon seniors each month.

Instead of ensuring basic nutrition to hard working low-income families, the

President proposes eliminating food stamps for as many as 35,000 Oregonians. The Food Stamp Program, which is one of the most efficient and error-free programs in the federal government, plays a critical role in reducing hunger and helping low-income Americans put nutritious food on the table every day.

Instead of investing in the health and well-being of the elderly in nursing homes, the disabled needing special care, children and low-income working families, the President proposes taking the largest cuts from the nation's basic health care programs. Medicare and Medicaid are marked for a combined \$50 billion in cuts over five years. A cut of that size would cause many people to lose health care coverage or *(continued on page 2)*

## Join in the Governor's Hunger Awareness Week April 10-15, 2006

- ✓ **April 10**—Oregon Food Bank and the Governor present the 2006 Hunger Heroes Awards and the new Advocacy Award honoring the life of Jerry Tippens.
- ✓ **April 11**—State Employees Food Drive Closing Ceremonies: 1:30pm-2:00pm, Governor's Ceremonial Office, State Capitol, Salem, Ore.
- ✓ **April 13**—Release of the New Executive Summary with the Governor, celebrating accomplishments and outlining the next steps to be taken for the *Act to End Hunger*: Roundtable with clients, doctors, healthcare advocates and Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force to emphasize the healthcare recommendation of the new Executive Summary and the tie to hunger: 10:00am-11:00am, Kaiser Permanente, Portland, Ore. Limited space. Call Patti Whitney-Wise at 503-595-5501 to RSVP.

# Taking the fair and balanced approach

The single largest budget threat facing those who care about meeting the needs of the human service programs and investing in the nation's future this year is the prospect of making permanent the President's FY2006 tax cuts. The impact on the increase in the deficit, and ultimately on funding for nutrition, health and social safety net programs, place this issue at the center of the public policy concerns facing human service advocates.

Under the Administration's proposal, cuts to domestic discretionary programs would total \$221 billion between FY 2007 and FY 2011. Over that same 5 year

timeframe, the President recommends cutting \$65 billion from Medicaid, Medicare, Food Stamps and other mandatory entitlement programs.

The Administration's FY 2006 budget proposes paying for tax cuts through additional deep cuts to human service safety net programs and an increase in deficit spending. The focus of our congressional delegates should be to preserve programs.

In an election year, it is politically popular to support tax cuts and political suicide to cut popular programs like Medicare or

federal nutrition programs. Congress should support a progressive and fair tax policy that supports a stable revenue source during times of economic growth and economic recessions.

Increasing the deficit is harmful to our future economic health. It weakens our ability to invest in services such as health care and food security that are very important to low-income Oregonians.

If advocates for human services programs focus solely on preventing cuts without engaging in the conversation about the revenues necessary to pay for these programs, we will spend the next year fighting to stave off cuts that Congress will be forced to make in the coming years as the fiscal reality of the lack of revenue to pay for the programs.

We must pursue a balanced approach to deficit reduction which will only happen if policymakers understand their constituents will not support an approach of

cutting programs for the most vulnerable Americans.

Increasing the deficit would have negative impacts on the frontline helping agencies serving individuals who experience hunger and poverty, as well as, all low-income Oregonians.

We must have a voice in this policy debate. The FY 2006 budget decisions have not been finalized. There is still the opportunity to speak out in favor of a fair budget that offers a balanced approach to deficit reduction and invests in the health and well-being of all Oregonians. A budget that avoids deep cuts to domestic programs and makes the fiscally sound choice of paying for any additional tax cuts without adding to the deficit would be the fair and balanced approach.

Your calls to congressional delegates can help frame the budget debate. See this month's 'take five' for actions you can take.



## Five years from now? *(continued from page 1)*

face higher out-of-pocket expenses which many cannot afford.

Cuts of this magnitude would be disruptive to the lives of a large number of people in our state and put more pressure on the helping agencies that are on the frontline of hunger.

According to the *Congressional Budget Office*, the President's latest budget proposal would increase the deficit by an additional \$1.6 trillion over the next six years (2006-2011). As the deficit continues to grow, something will have to give.

This misguided budget plan is not a done deal. We must insist that our budget reflects the right priorities and that it responds adequately to the needs of our most vulnerable communities while maintaining a reasonable, fiscally responsible tax policy.

Our elected leaders must acknowledge the true needs of so many Oregonians. Watch carefully over the next few months and weigh in with our delegates as Congress gets back to work on the budget.

The Advocacy Alert is published jointly by the Oregon Food Bank (OFB) and the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force (OHRTF).

**OFB Advocacy Staff:**  
 (503) 282-0555 [Portland area]  
 1-800-777-7427 [outside Portland]  
 Cassandra Garrison X210  
 Julie Massa X267  
<http://www.oregonfoodbank.org>  
[advocacy@oregonfoodbank.org](mailto:advocacy@oregonfoodbank.org)

**OHRTF Staff:**  
 Patti Whitney-Wise  
 (503) 595-5501  
[patti@oregonhunger.org](mailto:patti@oregonhunger.org)

Holly Wilkalis, (503) 595-5502  
[holly@oregonhunger.org](mailto:holly@oregonhunger.org)

Nancy Weed, (503) 998-6194  
[nancy@oregonhunger.org](mailto:nancy@oregonhunger.org)

Angela Martin, fiery and outspoken policy advocate and co-author for the Advocacy Alert newsletter has accepted a new position with *Our Oregon*, a statewide coalition of organizations and individuals who are working very hard for progressive political change across Oregon. She was selected for the position as the campaign manager for the payday loan ballot measure. Her vision, talents, ambition and passion will be such an asset to *Our Oregon*. During her three years with *Oregon Food Bank*, Angela brought to the Advocacy Department important political insight and strategic thinking that pushed our legislative advocacy to the forefront of the fight against hunger and poverty for thousands of Oregonians. We wish her the very best in her new position...but know she will still be very involved with us all in the fight against hunger and poverty across Oregon.