



# Advocacy Alert

OREGON FOOD BANK  
OREGON HUNGER RELIEF TASK FORCE

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Volume 12 Issue 2



## take five

(actions that take five minutes or less)

### Action:

Be the voice for the most vulnerable Oregonians! As Congress develops the budget priorities for 2007, voice your concern about the dangerous cuts to key domestic programs. Call 1-202-224-3753.

### Message:

- ✓ Oppose arbitrary spending caps that lock in deep cuts.
- ✓ Hold entitlement programs, such as Medicaid, Social Security and Food Stamps, harmless.

### 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

## Federal budget-cutting bill at expense of low-income

On the heels of a contentious battle over the 2006 budget-cutting bill, the administration has just released their blue print for a new round of budget cuts. In January, Congress sent the President a \$40 billion budget-cutting bill which will, as a result of cuts to Medicaid, significantly increase the cost of health care for our nation's most vulnerable families. The 2006 budget also slashes funding for a program that helps custodial parents collect child support from the absent parent. Moving up the educational ladder will now be more difficult as a result of cuts to student loan programs.

Adding insult to injury the \$40 billion in sacrifices low-income Americans are being forced to make will not help reduce the grow-

ing deficit. Congress is about to complete work on a tax cutting bill that will reduce revenue by \$100 billion over the next 10 years.

The administration's budget plan for 2007 would dramatically reduce the quality of life for millions of Americans:

- **WIC** – Under the President's proposal, cuts to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) will result in 6,100 fewer women and children served by 2011.
- **Food stamps** – Saving the Food Stamp Program from cuts under the 2006 budget was an important victory for anti-hunger advocates. Those same cuts are back in the President's 2007 budget pro-

posal. Due to how the cuts are structured, hardworking families in Oregon would be particularly hard hit. An estimated 35,000 Oregonians would lose food stamp benefits.

- **Food assistance for the elderly** – The budget proposal calls for eliminating the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. An estimated 1,000 elderly Oregonians would lose this critical monthly food assistance.
- **Energy assistance** – The long lines for energy assistance will only grow longer under the proposal to cut funding by 29 percent. Under this cut, Oregon will receive \$28.4 million less over the next 5 years to help low-income families cover their increasing heating and energy bills.

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## WIC at risk – A healthy, strong America in jeopardy

### WIC (Women, Infants and Children) is critical for families in need.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children – WIC – has improved children's health, growth and development and prevented health problems. WIC children enter school ready to learn and show better cognitive performance. As the nation's premier public health nutrition program, WIC serves over 8 million mothers, infants and children – nearly half of all America's infants and one-quarter of its children 1 – 5 years of age. Still, there is significant unmet need and WIC eligibles are unable to receive WIC services due to funding constraints and infrastructure limitations. The

President's FY 2007 budget would seriously erode benefits and services for participants, and irreparably damage effective state food and vendor cost containment measures. This proposal will reduce services for all mothers and children and because states are highly unlikely to be able to further reduce

*(continued on page 2)*

### Congratulations to Patti Whitney-Wise!



At a recent national conference, Patti Whitney-Wise, Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force was presented with the Wellstone/Wheeler award as *Hunger Advocate of the Year*. The award was presented by Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), a national partner in the fight against hunger.

# Federal budget-cutting bill (continued from page 1)

•**Adult Education** – The President’s budget calls for eliminating grants to states for vocational education and other adult education programs. Under the budget proposal, funding for the crucial education programs would be cut by 73 percent.

ing a budget resolution prepared by April. The budget resolution offers a broad look at spending priorities. That document will guide the work of the individual committees as they draft the budgets for individual programs.

cuts. Oregon has made important strides in the move to eliminate hunger. The cuts outlined in the President’s budget will undermine this success and push more families across the state into soup kitchens and emergency food pantries. See this month’s ‘take five’ for actions you can take to help give voice to the call for a fair and responsible budget.

The next step in the conversation lies with Congress. The House and the Senate will start working on their budgets with a goal of hav-

Members of Congress need to hear from us early and often. We cannot withstand another round of deep and damaging budget

# A healthy, strong America in jeopardy (continued from page 1)

per participant costs, nationally 885,000 mothers and children could lose benefits. The impact in Oregon is estimated between 900-1,200 individuals. Given the strain state budgets are experiencing, it is inconceivable that state legislatures and governors would be able or willing to provide matching funds. This proposal would be disastrous for the future of

WIC, leading to significant deterioration in services and state and local agencies closing down clinics, even entire programs. Last year, Congress wisely rejected a similar proposal.

Keeping WIC cost-effective is a sound investment – insuring strong and healthy children across Oregon.

# Emergency food clients choose between housing and food

A report from America’s Second Harvest, a nationwide organization of emergency food providers, finds in a study of 52,000 of its clients, that 35% of those seeking aid must often choose between paying for food and rent. In addition, 42% reported having to choose between food and household utilities, and 32% had to choose between food and medical costs.

Percent of client families that report making the following trade-offs:

- Paying for food vs. paying for utilities or heating fuel 41.3%
- Paying for food vs. paying for rent or mortgage 34.9%
- Paying for food vs. paying for medicine or medical care 31.5%
- Households with all three situations 18.1%
- Households with two of the situations 18.0%
- Households with one of the situations 16.9%

SAMPLE SIZE (N) 52,887

Of those reporting having to make such decisions, 36% had at least one family member employed, 12% were homeless, 10% were elderly, and 5% received TANF. Fully 68% reported incomes below the poverty level.

According to the study, the America’s Second Harvest system serves an estimated 24 million different people annually.

A draft of the report, *Hunger in America 2006*, is available at: [www.hungerinamerica.org/export/sites/hungerinamerica/about\\_the\\_study/A2HNationalReport.pdf](http://www.hungerinamerica.org/export/sites/hungerinamerica/about_the_study/A2HNationalReport.pdf).

A summary of its findings and tables is available at: [www.hungerinamerica.org/key\\_findings/#top](http://www.hungerinamerica.org/key_findings/#top)

Source: *America’s Second Harvest. 2006. Hunger Study 2006*  
[www.hungerinamerica.org/who\\_we\\_serve/Food\\_Insecurity/indicators/choice.html](http://www.hungerinamerica.org/who_we_serve/Food_Insecurity/indicators/choice.html)

## ***Congratulations and a fond farewell to Kim Thomas***

Almost 11 years ago, Kim Thomas was one of the trail blazers who started the *Advocacy Alert* newsletter. Since that first newsletter sent out in October 1995, the distribution has grown from a few hundred to a few thousand readers. Readers have taken action by making thousands of phone calls and writing letters to elected officials. Through her leadership and vision, the issues that impact everyone who experiences hunger and poverty are pushed to the forefront of legislative policy at the state and federal level. Kim inspired many to become citizen advocates and educated many policy makers through this monthly newsletter.

Kim has taken a position with Meyer Memorial Trust.

*Thank you, Kim, for your commitment to making a difference in the lives of Oregonians.*



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

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