

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 18, 2013

The Honorable Patrick McCrory
Governor of North Carolina
20301 Mail Service Ctr
Raleigh NC 27699-0300 (B)

Dear Governor McCrory,

As the holiday season approaches, more Americans become mindful of those in need of food because of our strong tradition of helping the less fortunate this time of year. Yet at a time when nearly 49 million Americans are food insecure – including 16 million children – we need to recognize the need for food donations throughout the year, not just at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

No one should go hungry in America, the land of plenty and the world's wealthiest nation. A proposal is moving through Congress to create a congressional commission aimed at alleviating hunger in the United States. The bipartisan group would develop recommendations to encourage public-private partnerships and greater involvement from community and faith-based groups to reduce the need for inefficient federal government nutrition programs while still providing a critical safety net for the most vulnerable and hungry. The plan has been endorsed by Alliance to End Hunger, Bread for the World and Feeding America.

The federal government presently provides roughly 96 percent of the money spent on food assistance; private charities provide the rest. Given our nation's current fiscal woes, this is unsustainable. While it is important for the government to continue to provide a safety net for those who fall on hard times, the simple reality is that until we fully address our nation's exploding debt and deficit, further cuts to discretionary spending are all but inevitable. As you are aware, stimulus-level food stamp spending expired on November 1, which translated into a reduction of roughly \$5 billion on SNAP spending for fiscal year 2014. These changes are independent of any potential fluctuations to the program that may result from those being considered by the Farm Bill conferees. This is already having an impact on food banks in both North Carolina and Virginia.

Today, Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA) wrote Governor-elect Terry McAuliffe of Virginia with suggestions that would ensure food is distributed to those in need year round -- *at no cost to taxpayers*.

We feel these ideas could also help alleviate the hunger problem in North Carolina:

- Designate one person in your office to serve as the food bank/pantry coordinator so the food banks would have one point of contact who would be responsible for working with the food banks and pantries across the state. With the growing demand for food, it has

become nearly impossible for food bank workers to do any outreach, so the point of contact would be charged with keeping the “need” in the news.

- Have one of your agencies develop a central “one-stop” Web site for all food banks and pantries to provide information for donors, volunteers and clients, which would centralize information and provide a platform where people could learn more about needed items and how to get involved. It would also include contact information, links to each food bank/pantry’s site, a summary of each food bank’s unique services and needs, a map of where each food bank/pantry is located, and “real time” information on food shortages in each part of the state for churches, civic groups, the business community and the press to access.
- Pledge to end hunger by calling on all state agencies, schools, businesses, churches and civic organizations to commit to participating in a rolling food drive to re-stock the shelves of local food pantries. For example, schools could donate in the late winter, churches and civic organizations in the spring, businesses in the summer and state agencies in the fall. Currently, there is a large influx of food during the holiday season but shelves are often empty in the spring and summer months as people turn attention elsewhere. This would ensure a rolling system of food donations.
 - Have your Secretary of Administration develop a program for state employees similar to the highly successful Fed’s Feeds Families program that just this year collected a record-breaking 9 million pounds of food, up from 7.2 million in 2012.
 - Have your Secretary of Agriculture incentivize farmers to set aside land for the purpose of gleaning and allowing it to be qualified as a charitable gift, and have farmers set aside an acre of their land for the local Scout group to cultivate and then donate to an area food bank.
 - Have your Secretary of Education ask each school hold one or two food drives and donate unused cafeteria food to local food banks.
 - Have your Secretary of Commerce ask the Chambers of Commerce, major corporations and small businesses around the state to hold food drives, or “adopt” a local food bank. Honor those organizations that donate the most food and develop a marketing campaign to raise public awareness. If successful, this could become an annual event.
- Host your own food drive to highlight the need. Recently, Congressman Pittenger joined Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the Billy Graham Library and Charlotte-area media to host a food drive benefitting Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina. The event resulted in significant media coverage that focused on the dramatic need for additional food donations in Charlotte.
- Take a leadership role in educating schools about the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act, which protects schools from liability issues they used to fear if they gave away unused

food, and allows donations of excess food to local pantries. In 2011, language that Congressman Wolf authored was signed into law making this explicitly clear -- schools can donate food without fear of liability. The purpose of the law is simple -- keep excess school food out of the garbage and get it to our food banks -- and it has already proven successful in places like the Blue Valley School District in Kansas, which has been leading the way with their innovative school recovery program that puts this law into action. A short video summarizing their efforts may be found at <http://wolf.house.gov/foodrecovery>.

Virginia has already had success with programs like the "Governor's Bowl" food and fund drive, which has allowed business communities across the state to take part in a friendly competition aimed at helping meet the needs of local food banks and pantries during the summer months, when donations are typically at their lightest. The Legal Food Frenzy has produced more than 8.5 million pounds of food through the efforts of the Attorney General of Virginia, the Young Lawyers Division of the Virginia Bar Association and the Federation of Virginia Food Banks. The Scouting for Food program is also extremely successful, and we regularly meet with local food banks and pantries to discuss their needs.

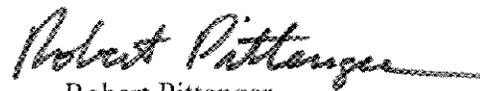
In the coming weeks, food drives will be held in offices, schools, churches and communities all over America. But as you know, families are in need during the other 10 months out of the year. They have scant resources after the holidays are over when donations stop coming in.

These are but a few examples that barely scratch the surface. There are so many ways we can combat the pervasive yet solvable hunger problem that exists all over the country, and you should feel free to contact our staff in Washington if you would like more information. We look forward to working with you.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,


Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress


Robert Pittenger
Member of Congress