

June 18, 2013

Dear Representative:

As organizations that work to alleviate global hunger and poverty around the world, **we strongly encourage you to support the Royce-Engel amendment (#55) to H.R. 1947**, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management (FARRM) Act, which is expected to be voted on this week.

This bipartisan amendment, sponsored by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) updates the Food for Peace program to provide greater flexibility and help more people with our overseas food assistance without spending any additional U.S. taxpayer dollars.

Since 1954, U.S. funded food aid has helped feed more than three billion people in more than 150 countries. But the system for providing this aid must evolve to provide the flexibility to meet today's needs. It is now more important than ever that U.S. food assistance programs maximize their reach and effectiveness and that we make reforms to these crucial programs to meet the needs of millions of families around the world.

With current law still requiring the vast majority of our aid be provided in the form of U.S.-sourced commodities, the U.S. needs greater flexibility to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies and longer-term food insecurity. In emergency situations in particular, the delivery of U.S. commodities can be extremely difficult – due to insecurity, as has been the case in Syria, or due to a host of other obstacles. Purchasing food locally or regionally, or providing cash transfers/food vouchers that work through local market systems, is often the best option for getting food aid to people who need it. Independent research has shown this approach can reach people considerably faster than shipping commodities from the U.S. These are well-tested and proven approaches that come with strong safeguards to ensure assistance is delivered quickly and not diverted from those in need.

The Royce-Engel Amendment would reform U.S. food aid to provide much-needed flexibility by:

- Allowing up to 45% of authorized food aid funds to be used for purchasing food closer to the crises and people it is intended to help. This gives the U.S. more options for saving lives and reaching millions of additional people;
- Eliminating the minimum requirement for monetization and potentially allowing the agricultural and economic development projects currently supported through monetization to be directly funded, which could increase the number of people helped.

This amendment does not stop direct food aid shipped from the U.S.; in fact, the majority of authorized food aid would be required to be U.S.-based commodities.

Along with our organizations, a wide array of other stakeholders have affirmed the importance of updating the U.S. food aid program to make it more flexible – including agricultural business

leaders, U.S. farmers, and government officials including the Secretaries of Agriculture, State, and Defense, and the USAID Administrator.

When 870 million people around the world go hungry every day, making every food aid dollar count is not only a responsible use of taxpayer money, it is a moral imperative.

Former chiefs of staff to both President George W Bush and President Bill Clinton said it best in a recent *Wall Street Journal* editorial, “*If there was an issue on which big-hearted humanitarians and tightfisted fiscal hawks should find common purpose, food aid reform is it. Millions around the world are counting on us.*”

As U.S. humanitarian and advocacy organizations working around the world, including many groups that currently implement food aid programs, we strongly urge you to save lives and money by **voting “YES” on the Royce-Engel Amendment (#55).**

Sincerely,

1. Action Aid USA
2. American Jewish World Service
3. American Public Health Association
4. The Borgen Project
5. Bread for the World
6. CARE USA
7. Catholic Relief Services
8. Church World Service
9. The Episcopal Church
10. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
11. Helen Keller International
12. The Hunger Project
13. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
14. InterAction
15. International Relief & Development
16. International Rescue Committee
17. Life for Relief and Development
18. Lutheran World Relief
19. Mercy Corps
20. Mercy-USA for Aid and Development
21. Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network
22. ONE Campaign
23. Oxfam America
24. Partners in Health
25. Presbyterian Church (USA)
26. RESULTS
27. Save the Children
28. Winrock
29. World Food Program USA
30. World Vision

act:onaid



