

**Farm Bill Contains Important Investments for Nutrition Programs in Maryland
Maryland Hunger Solutions Joins Majority Leader Hoyer, Members of Congressional Hispanic
Caucus and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus in Urging Passage of Farm Bill**

Washington, D.C. – May 14, 2008 – Kimberley Chin, director of Maryland Hunger Solutions (MDHS), today joined Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and leaders of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus in highlighting the strength of the Farm Bill's nutrition title and the important investments it makes for hungry Americans.

Chin was the only speaker at the press conference who was not a member of Congress. "I was honored to be able to join Congressional leaders for this important effort," said Chin.

At the event, Chin pointed out that 35.5 million people face a constant struggle against hunger, according to the latest USDA data. In Maryland, one of out every ten households struggles to place food on the table. As costs for food, housing, and energy skyrocket and the economy weakens, even more low-income families are finding themselves stretched to the limit.

"Across the nation and in Maryland – in cities, suburbs, and rural areas – struggling families will benefit from the improvements made by the nutrition provisions of the Farm Bill," said Chin. "Food stamps are the first defense against hunger, and this Farm Bill makes them stronger."

Congress is slated to vote on the Farm Bill this week. It includes \$10.361 billion in new funding to improve food stamps and other essential nutrition programs. The nutrition title boosts emergency food assistance program funding for food banks, and makes essential and long-overdue improvements to the Food Stamp Program that will benefit current recipients.

Improvements to the Food Stamp Program include:

- Increasing the \$10 minimum monthly benefit (unchanged for 30 years) to \$14, and indexing it for inflation;
- Increasing and indexing the standard deduction for households of three or fewer;
- Removing the cap on the deductible amount of child care expenses in eligible households;
- Indexing the food stamp household asset limits (\$2,000; \$3,000 for households with elderly or disabled), which have gone unchanged for decades; and
- Allowing more families to save without penalty by excluding education savings and tax-preferred retirement accounts from food stamp asset limits.

Nationally, more than 28 million people participate in the Food Stamp Program. In Maryland, more than 300,000 people participate in the program each month.

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Maryland Hunger Solutions is an initiative of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) that works to reduce poverty and end hunger in Maryland. Its main strategy is to get tens of thousands more Marylanders, especially children, enrolled in available federal food programs.