

News from Senator

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION HEARING ON
REAUTHORIZATION OF SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM
FOR WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC),
COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM, AND
TEMPORARY EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

THIS YEAR, THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION FACES NOT ONLY THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 1985 FARM BILL, BUT ALSO THE REAUTHORIZATION OF ALL OF THE NON-ENTITLEMENT CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS, INCLUDING WIC, THE COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSFP), AND THE TEMPORARY EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, NOW COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS TEFAP. THIS IS THE THIRD SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING TO BE HELD THIS SESSION.

WIC PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION

OUR FIRST WITNESSES WILL TESTIFY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WIC PROGRAM, AND CHANGES THAT THEY WOULD RECOMMEND TO IMPROVE ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR PROGRAMS IN THE CONGRESS. JUST RECENTLY, OMB REQUESTED THE ADDITIONAL \$76 MILLION NECESSARY TO FUND THIS PROGRAM AT A CURRENT SERVICES LEVEL OF 3.1 MILLION PARTICIPANTS FOR FY 1985. ALTHOUGH, TIME AND TIME AGAIN, THIS PROGRAM HAS DEMONSTRATED ITS COST-EFFECTIVENESS, WE ARE STILL NOT AT A POINT IN DEFICIT REDUCTION EFFORTS, WHERE WE CAN AFFORD TO EXPAND THIS DESERVING PROGRAM. WE ALWAYS HEAR THAT THE PROGRAM ONLY SERVES ONE-THIRD OF THE ELIGIBLE POPULATION. HOWEVER, THIS ESTIMATE IS BASED ON INCOME CRITERIA, AND NOT HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT -- A FACT THAT WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND IN OUR DELIBERATIONS.

WIC'S GREAT TRACK RECORD

AS THIS AUDIENCE IS CERTAINLY AWARE, THE WIC PROGRAM HAS BECOME PERHAPS THE MOST POPULAR BIPARTISAN PROGRAM IN THE ENTIRE CONGRESS. AMONG FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS, IT'S REPUTATION IS WELL-DESERVED. WIC IS A TRUE NUTRITION PROGRAM, WHOSE BENEFITS ARE TAILORED TO MEET THE SPECIAL NUTRITION NEEDS OF THE RECIPIENTS IT SERVES. EVALUATION STUDIES INDICATE THAT THE WIC PROGRAM HAS BEEN COST EFFECTIVE IN BOTH HEALTH AND DOLLAR TERMS. THE MOST FREQUENTLY QUOTED STUDY DONE BY THE HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH FOUND THAT EACH \$1 SPENT IN THE PRENATAL COMPONENT OF WIC SAVES \$3 IN MEDICAL COSTS DUE TO THE REDUCED NUMBER OF LOW BIRTHWEIGHT INFANTS REQUIRING EXPENSIVE NEONATAL CARE.

MEMBERS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE AISLE ARE WELL AWARE OF THE TREMENDOUS TRACK RECORD THIS PROGRAM HAS MAINTAINED. IT SPEAKS VERY HIGHLY OF WIC, THAT, AT A TIME WHEN OTHER FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS WERE UNDERGOING SIGNIFICANT BUDGET REDUCTIONS, THE WIC PROGRAM WAS ALLOWED TO EXPAND. THE NUMBER OF LOW-INCOME WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN THE WIC PROGRAM HAS GROWN FROM 2.1 MILLION IN 1981 TO 3.1 MILLION IN 1985. BACK IN 1981, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVESTED ABOUT \$890 MILLION IN WIC, AND WE ARE NOW SPENDING ABOUT \$1.5 BILLION ON THIS VERY WORTHWHILE PROGRAM.

MAJOR WIC EVALUATION COMPLETED

WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO HAVE WITH US HERE TODAY, DR. DAVID RUSH, WHO HAS JUST RECENTLY COMPLETED THE FIRST NATIONAL WIC EVALUATION STUDY FOR THE USDA. THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY WILL BE MOST HELPFUL AS WE PROCEED IN COMMITTEE TO DEAL WITH CHANGES THAT SHOULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE AN ALREADY SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM IN THE REAUTHORIZATION PROCESS.

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION, I PLAN TO INTRODUCE A CHILD NUTRITION REAUTHORIZATION BILL THAT WILL INCLUDE COMPREHENSIVE CHANGES FOR THE WIC PROGRAM. I HAVE BEEN WAITING TO HEAR WHAT DR. RUSH HAS TO SAY, BEFORE THIS LEGISLATION IS INTRODUCED, SO THAT RECOMMENDATIONS HE MAY HAVE CAN BE INCLUDED.

CSFP AND TEFAP REAUTHORIZATION

ON MAY 15, I INTRODUCED THE DOMESTIC FOOD ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1985, ALONG WITH SENATORS BOSCHWITZ, LEAHY, ANDREWS, DANFORTH AND HATFIELD. THIS BIPARTISAN EFFORT INCLUDES PROVISIONS TO REAUTHORIZE BOTH THE COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM AND THE TEMPORARY EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR FOUR YEARS. BOTH OF THESE PROGRAMS WILL BE DEALT WITH IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM AND FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION.

OVER THE YEARS, THE COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM HAS PROVIDED COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES TO THE WIC PROGRAM, AND HAS FILLED A VALUABLE NEED AMONG THE ELDERLY IN AREAS WHERE THIS PROGRAM EXISTS. FOCUS HOPE IN DETROIT AND THE PROJECT IN NEW ORLEANS ARE PERHAPS THE MOST-WELL KNOWN, BUT THERE ARE MANY SMALLER PILOT PROJECTS THROUGHOUT THIS COUNTRY THAT PROVIDE VALUABLE ASSISTANCE TO THOSE IN NEED OF FOOD.

THE TEMPORARY EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS ONE IN WHICH I HAVE A SPECIAL INTEREST -- YOU MAY RECALL THAT IT BEGAN WITH A DOLE-HATFIELD AMENDMENT TO THE JOBS BILL IN 1983. ECONOMIC TIMES WERE HARD, AND UNEMPLOYMENT WAS HIGH. I LATER INTRODUCED LEGISLATION TO CONTINUE WHAT WAS INTENDED TO BE A VERY TEMPORARY PROGRAM FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS.

THIS PROGRAM EXPIRES AT THE END OF FY'85, AND IT IS TIME TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM AND TO DETERMINE IF IT SHOULD BE CONTINUED. S. 1142 WOULD REAUTHORIZE THIS PROGRAM FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS. ALTHOUGH THE ECONOMY HAS SINCE IMPROVED, THERE CONTINUE TO BE MANY AREAS IN THE COUNTRY WHICH HAVE NOT YET SHARED IN OUR GENERAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY. FOR THIS REASON, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD REAUTHORIZE THE PROGRAM, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS NOT MY INTENTION TO CREATE A NEW PERMANENT PROGRAM.