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URGENT ACTION NEEDED: Farm Bill “Cloture” Vote In Senate Tomorrow

Your calls to Senators Hutchison and Cornyn are urgently needed now in support of a new motion to limit debate and amendments (so-called “cloture”) and move forward the 2007 Farm Bill (S. 2302). The Farm Bill contains important improvements to the Food Stamp Program and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The bill has been stalled over disagreements on the number and types of amendments that will be in order. A key vote to break the stalemate is set for Friday, December 7th.

- For 30 years, the Food Stamp Program has ensured that low-income Americans have the means to afford a healthy diet.
- In Texas, Food Stamps help 2.3 million people put food on the table. Most are children, seniors, or someone with a disability.
- Cuts to the program 10 years ago have reduced the purchasing power of Food Stamps, making it harder for families to afford an adequate diet. The average family now receives only \$3 per person per day for food.
- The Senate Farm Bill increases the purchasing power of Food Stamps, helping almost 11 million people, including about 890,000 Texans.

Action Needed

Starting today and until the cloture vote on Friday, December 7th, call your Senators and urge a “yes” vote on the cloture motion on the 2007 Farm Bill.

Message: Hungry people can’t wait. The Senate must finish its work on the 2007 Farm Bill and pass a Farm Bill with a strong nutrition title as soon as possible in December. Toll-free line: Use a toll-free line to the U.S. Capitol (1-800-826-9624) that has been made available by AARP while the Senate Farm Bill is pending. (You will hear a short message about the nutrition title before being transferred to an office). Or call your Senators via the Capitol switchboard (202-224-3121).

A first attempt at cloture on November 16th fell five votes short of the 60 needed to invoke it. Senator Hutchison voted **against** cloture the first time, while Senator Cornyn did not cast a vote.

What’s at Stake:

- The House of Representatives approved its Farm Bill (H.R. 2419) on July 27th. That bill provides **\$4.2 billion in new five-year funding for nutrition programs**, mainly for food stamps and the Emergency Food Assistance Programs (TEFAP), which helps food banks feed the hungry.
- The Senate Agriculture Committee voted out its Farm Bill on October 25th, with **\$4.3 billion in new five-year funding for nutrition programs**. On November 1st, Senate Agriculture Committee leaders announced a bipartisan agreement to take **more than \$1 billion in offsets** approved in another part of the bill to further strengthen the Food Stamp minimum benefit and asset tests and to increase TEFAP funding.