National Hunger Commission Report

Thoughts on Implementation Possibilities for States and Municipalities

February, 2016

The Bi-partisan Report of the National Commission on Hunger was released January 4, 2016. Created by Congress in 2014 as part of the Farm Bill, the Commission was charged with providing policy recommendations to Congress and the USDA to more effectively use existing programs and funds of the Department of Agriculture to combat domestic hunger and food insecurity. While we hope that readers will review and consider the entire report (an hour’s investment of time); the Executive Summary will provide basic background and context. The full Recommendations Section provides the complete set of twenty recommendations, including rationale and action items.

While some recommendations will require regulatory changes or action by Congress, there are important opportunities which can be addressed through policy change or administrative strategies at the State and/or municipal level - actions which do not require an Act of Congress.

This document seeks to identify and encourage action on certain Hunger Commission recommendations by the Governor’s Task Force on Food Security and/or by the Governor’s Office or various State Agencies. The Hunger Commission recommendations are bi-partisan, well-researched and thoroughly considered. The research and testimony is available for review. The following recommendations may represent an opportunity for Nevada to begin implementation at the state level:

SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (R1-10)

- Improve state support for job training, placement and career development for SNAP recipients, and ensuring that necessary supports and infrastructure are in place to facilitate finding work. (R1-4 action items)
- Address the CLIFF EFFECT – improving responsiveness to earned-income fluctuations (R2)
- Create a more streamlined and effective approach to re-certification for SNAP recipients (R2)
- Create a financial incentives program (healthy bucks, double your bucks) to encourage and facilitate purchase of high quality nutrition with SNAP funds at Farmers Markets and grocery stores. (R3)
- Reform of SNAP Nutrition Education (SNAP-ED) to ensure that investment produces positive impact on health improvement and food security – use of high quality evaluation tools (R6)
- Maximize SNAP’s ability to promote well-being: “no wrong door” approach between SNAP and non-nutrition family support programs. This is NOT “one stop shop” – (R7-3 action items)
- (R8) encourages use of demonstration projects and speedy determination by USDA. If we have good and innovative ideas - let’s put them forth!
- Improved training for front-line SNAP caseworkers and related metrics – (R9)
- Address wellbeing of military and former military families – high risk and high reward.
collaboration at the state level, and among the eleven key Federal agencies which administer the wide variety of programs addressing these issues is crucial.

A strong Leadership Council will also include strong representation, participation and commitment from the corporate, non-profit, university and faith-based sectors, per the recommendation, along with civic engagement in our communities and the involvement of those experiencing hunger. The Governor's Council on Food Security could be the basis for this Leadership Council. Ensuring that our Council becomes permanent through legislation in the next session would be a great first step.

Lastly, (R20) calls on the Leadership Council to End Hunger to monitor hunger at the Federal and State levels of eight special, at-risk populations identified by the Commission as particularly vulnerable to hunger.

Recommendations 19 and 20 are perhaps the most important of all these carefully considered and crafted bi-partisan recommendations, because with these two, the first 18 could easily be addressed.

States and municipalities have an opportunity and perhaps a responsibility to take and encourage action to implement recommendations where possible and at the very least, begin a dialogue about how to begin solving hunger, community by community.

Respectfully submitted,

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