

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

March 5, 2009

Thomas James "Tom" Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Peter Richard Orszag  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary Vilsack and OMB Director Orszag,

We write to convey to you our request for increased funding in the President's Fiscal Year 2010 Budget for a critical USDA-administered international program, the **George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (McGovern-Dole)**. As the past three Secretaries of Agriculture have attested, this program has made a critical difference in the lives of thousands of children and their communities around the world. We believe it is urgent to sustain and expand this program and to restore funding for the McGovern-Dole program to levels similar to those established by the Clinton Administration. For these reasons, **we strongly urge you to provide \$300 million for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education Program in the President's Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Proposal.**

Regrettably, the Bush Administration has recommended only level funding of \$100 million for the last three years. Not only is this just one-third of the funding it received under the Clinton Administration pilot program, but the rising costs of food and transportation have effectively shrunk the number of projects and beneficiaries. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for Congress to increase McGovern-Dole funding to where it needs to be without a presidential request.

We recognize the fiscal constraints that confront you in developing the FY 2010 budget. We firmly believe, however, that increased funding to sustain and expand the McGovern-Dole Program contributes to achieving President Obama's priorities to increase food security and access to education for the world's most vulnerable children.

With over 400 million children suffering from chronic hunger and over 130 million not attending school, reaching those who could benefit from the McGovern-Dole Program requires a firm commitment to continued support and significant resources. For just a few cents a day, McGovern-Dole has made a difference in the lives of children and communities, promoted American values in the most positive terms, and helped achieve U.S. foreign policy and national security goals. Its flexibility and ability to be tailored to local needs ensure that American products, commodities, and financial and technical support are directly associated with hunger alleviation, educational opportunity and sustainable development. Few programs deliver so much for such a minimal investment.

We enclose for your review a bipartisan letter sent to then-President George W. Bush from 183 Members of Congress asking that the McGovern-Dole Program receive \$300 million in funding for Fiscal Year 2009. Unfortunately, the funding was not included in that budget. We are hopeful that you and the Obama Administration will more readily recognize the economic, social and national security benefits that will result from a more affirmative response to increased funding.

**We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you directly at the earliest opportunity about the tremendous success and impact the McGovern-Dole Program has had.** To schedule such a meeting, please feel free to contact Mr. Daniel Holt in the office of Representative McGovern at 202-225-6101.

Thank you for your attention to our request for a meeting and your serious consideration of restoring funding for the McGovern-Dole Program to \$300 million in the President's FY 2010 Budget Proposal. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Marco Rubio

Louise Slaughter

Don O. Manzoni

Jack Rahall

Mark E. Amodeo

Barnett Frank

Tim McGovern

John P. Murtha

Michael

George Miller

James Thurman

cc: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State  
Rahm Emanuel, White House Chief of Staff

Henry G. Wapman

John Longenecker

John H. Ingersoll

Robert Lee

John Schalkowsky

John B. L.

John T. Lowrey

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Signatories on bipartisan letter to Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and OMB Director Peter Orszag regarding FY 2010 funding for the George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program:

Signatories on Page 2:

Marion Berry  
Vice-Chair, Steering and Policy Committee

Louise McIntosh Slaughter  
Chair, Committee on Rules

Doris O. Matusi  
Co-Chair, National Children's Study  
Working Group

Nick J. Rahall II  
Chair, Committee on Resources

Anna G. Eshoo  
Chair, Subcommittee on Intelligence  
Community Management  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Barney Frank  
Chair, Committee on Financial Services

James P. McGovern  
Co-Chair, House Hunger Caucus

John P. Murtha  
Chair, Subcommittee on Defense  
House Appropriations Committee

Ike Skelton  
Chair, Committee on Armed Services

George Miller  
Chair, Committee on Education and Labor

Jo Ann Emerson  
Co-Chair, House Hunger Caucus

Rosa L. DeLauro  
Chair, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Committee on Appropriations

Signatories on Page 3:

Henry A. Waxman  
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce

John Conyers, Jr.  
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary

John D. Dingell  
Chairman Emeritus  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Barbara Lee  
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

Janice D. Schakowsky  
Democratic Chair, Women's Caucus

John B. Larson  
Chair, Democratic Caucus

Nita M. Lowey  
Chair, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations  
Committee on Appropriations