

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 16, 2009

Statement by the President on the Release of the Annual Household Food Security Report

"As American families prepare to gather for Thanksgiving, we received an unsettling report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that found that hunger rose significantly last year. This trend was already painfully clear in many communities across our nation, where food stamp applications are surging and food pantry shelves are emptying.

It is particularly troubling that there were more than 500,000 families in which a child experienced hunger multiple times over the course of the year. Our children's ability to grow, learn, and meet their full potential – and therefore our future competitiveness as a nation – depends on regular access to healthy meals.

My Administration is committed to reversing the trend of rising hunger. The first task is to restore job growth, which will help relieve the economic pressures that make it difficult for parents to put a square meal on the table each day. But we are also taking targeted steps to prevent Americans from experiencing hunger. Earlier this year, we extended help to those hit hardest by this economic downturn by boosting SNAP benefits. And Secretary Vilsack is working hard to make sure eligible families are able to access those benefits as well as the School Lunch and Breakfast Program. In addition, a bill I signed into law last month invests \$85 million in new strategies to prevent children from experiencing hunger in the summer.

Hunger is a problem that we can solve together, and I look forward to working with Congress to pass a strong child nutrition bill that will help children get the healthy meals they need to grow and succeed – and help keep America competitive in the decades to come."

The full USDA Household Food Security report can be viewed here: www.ers.usda.gov/features/householdfoodsecurity/

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