



ADVOCACY ALERT



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Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Hunger Task Force

2008 Election wrap up

We did it! Thanks to the efforts of many in the Oregon Food Bank Network and more than 125 partnering individuals and organizations across the state, Oregon voters defeated a number of costly measures. Oregon Food Bank was particularly thrilled with the defeat of Measure 64, a ballot measure that would have greatly restricted charitable giving, including to the Oregon Food Bank Network. The vote was extremely close on election night but when all the votes were counted, the 'No' campaign won with a near 20,000 vote margin. Oregon Food Bank also opposed Measure 59, which would have cost the state billions in revenue by allowing Oregonians to

deduct the full amount of their federal taxes on their state returns. Fortunately it was defeated by Oregon voters for the third time, this time by a wide margin (64 percent no, 36 percent yes).

With demand for emergency food boxes soaring, unemployment on the rise, and foreclosures looming, we shouldn't have to defeat bad ballot measures and defend children and working families. Oregon Food Bank's most recent 2007 - 2008 *Hunger Factors Survey* revealed that more than 200,000 people per month ate a meal from an emergency food box, an increase of 8,000 since the previous year. In the last two months, regional food banks across the



state have reported record increases in demand, up to 43 percent increases in some regions compared with last year.

The need is clear. Hungry Oregonians should not have to compete with out-of-state donors who do not have their interest in mind. Thankfully, Oregonians have spoken once again. We will have to work together in the long run to see that these measures are not successful in the years to come.

In addition to the slate of ballot measures, Oregonians voted in several changes at the state and federal level.

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take five

(actions that take five minutes or less)

Message:

Many Oregonians are facing the loss of all that is most basic: jobs, homes, food, and health care. We need to make smart investments that will stimulate our economy and protect Oregonians who need help getting through this financial crisis. Working together, we can turn the tide.

We need the Legislature to join with us. The Legislature has the power to address the revenue imbalance in our state. In this time of crisis, we must expand assistance to support the growing number of vulnerable Oregonians. This investment will also stimulate our economy. We need a revenue solution to this problem, not a cut to spending.

Action:

Contact your state senator and House member and urge them to hold harmless health, human services and other essentials supports like housing and food assistance programs.

Oregon ranked #3 in nation for high percentage of hungry citizens

According to a recent report by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) 12.4 percent of Oregonians (458,000 people) lived in households that struggled with hunger or were "food insecure" during the 2005-2007 period. Oregon was ranked third in the nation for "very low food security" the term used to describe those households that skipped meals or reduced their food intake to make ends meet.

Oregon worked hard to impact hunger over the past eight years, when it was dubbed the "Hungriest State in the Nation" in 2000. Anti-hunger advocates joined forces with the governor to bring attention to the issue and created the *Act to End Hunger*, a five-year plan to reduce hunger in Oregon. And it was successful, 26 of the 40 actions were accomplished. In 2005, Oregon dropped from number one

to number 17, a statistically significant improvement.

However, rising joblessness, falling wages, and rapidly rising food and fuel costs have meant that more and more families are stretched to the limit and beyond.

Oregon's unemployment rate has shot up to 7.3 percent, and Oregonians are competing for scarcer jobs. We will need to preserve

safety net services, on both the state and federal levels, so families can rebound more quickly and will be less likely to fall into ongoing poverty.

The governor has been asked to preserve safety net services in his 2009-11 budget. Anti-hunger advocates are also calling on Congress to pass an additional economic recovery package. It will be important to rebuild our economy while also preventing hunger and poverty.

Election wrap up

(cont. from front page)

In Oregon, the Democrats won a supermajority in the Oregon House with 36 seats. On the Senate side, the Democrats have maintained their majority with 18 seats and 12 Republicans.

Former majority leader

Rep. Dave Hunt was voted in as the speaker of the House, replacing Jeff Merkley who was elected to the United States Senate. Rep. Mary Nolan will take Rep. Hunt's previous position. Senator Peter Courtney was re-elected as Senate president and Sena-

tor Richard Devlin as majority leader. On the Republican side, Rep. Bruce Hanna was elected as minority leader and Senator Ted Ferrioli was re-elected as minority leader. Committee assignments will be announced in early December.

Support a Federal Stimulus Package

Due to the current economic downturn, more Oregonians find it difficult to feed themselves and their families. Oregon Department of Human Services data show that participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly the Food Stamp Program) increased by more than 13 percent from October '07 to October '08.

We must continue to press our congressional delegation to support an economic stimulus package. We're optimistic these issues will be raised again by the new Congress and Administration in 2009.

Oregon's kids need stronger nutrition programs

In 2009, the United States Congress will reauthorize federal child nutrition programs—including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), school lunch and breakfast, child care meals, summer food, and after-school snacks and meals. This represents a great opportunity to improve the effectiveness of these programs. Oregon's kids need stronger child nutrition programs in order to thrive physically

and mentally, be able to learn in school and after-school programs, and grow up to reach their full potential. By ensuring all children have adequate food where they learn and play, we will be feeding our future.

What's at stake for Oregon

- * More than 230,000 Oregon children are eligible for a free or reduced price school lunch, roughly 42 percent of all students.
- * The School Breakfast Program serves more than 135,000, representing only 55 percent of those participating in the National School Lunch Program.
- * The WIC Program serves more than 110,000 Oregonians.
- * Child and Adult Care Food Programs serve more than 53,000 Oregonians.
- * The Summer Food Service Program serves more than 44,000 Oregon children on an average day.
- * Of those who eat emergency food distributed by Oregon Food Bank, 37 percent are children.
- * Child nutrition programs represent a \$128.6 million annual federal investment in Oregon's youth.

Oregon Food Bank and Oregon Hunger Task Force advocates have

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formed a coalition of organizations to work on the reauthorization of these important programs. The coalition's agenda includes: 1) expanding access to nutrition programs, so all hungry children have the opportunity to eat; 2) updating and improving nutrition standards to support healthy eating and address obesity; 3) enhancing administrative efficiency to feed more children, and 4) increasing funding so programs can provide nutritious meals and healthy snacks. For information about the coalition, please visit <http://groups.google.com/group/OCNRC> or contact Jeff Kleen, (503) 419-4176 or jkleen@oregonfoodbank.org.