THE ECONOMIC COST OF HUNGER IN OHIO
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

Lost Business and lost my family. Became a part-time dad. Selling everything I own just to pay bills. I know there are worse off than me, but why should there be?

Senate Finance and Financial Appropriations Committee
June 2, 2011
Am. Sub. H.B. 153

Testimony of
Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director
Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks

Attachment A: Federal Poverty Level Card
Attachment B: Population by County at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
Attachment C: Rising Food and Fuel Prices Fact Sheet
Ten reasons why the State should support an investment in the Ohio Food Purchase and Agricultural Clearance Program of $17 million per year or $34 million over the 2012-2013 biennium.

10. 3,462,181 Ohioans, 30% of the State’s population, are now eligible for emergency food assistance.\textsuperscript{i}

9. Over the last decade the number of poor Ohioans grew by a staggering 46.1% and the effects of the Great Recession are still with us.\textsuperscript{ii}

8. Ohio ranked 50\textsuperscript{th} out of all states in income growth over the last 50 years and half of all jobs created in the State last year paid the minimum wage.\textsuperscript{iii} The number of jobs that pay the minimum wage in Ohio has increased 118\% since 2007.\textsuperscript{iv}

7. Last year, 43\% of the people we served reported making choices between food and gasoline.\textsuperscript{v} The cost of fuel has increased by 46\% in the past year ($2.73 a gallon in May 2010 to $3.99 a gallon May 2011), and more than $2.00 a gallon in the last 2 years.\textsuperscript{vi}

6. Citi Investment Research found that households with incomes below $9,846.00 a year spend 35.6\% of their income on food.\textsuperscript{vii} Half of all Ohioans visiting food pantries have incomes of less than $10,000.00 a year.\textsuperscript{viii}

5. Ohio ranks third in the nation for children under the age of five who are at-risk of hunger.\textsuperscript{ix} One in two babies born in the State of Ohio are potentially eligible for WIC, a supplemental program.\textsuperscript{x} 44\% of all children enrolled in Ohio’s public and private schools are now so poor they qualify for free and reduced price meals.\textsuperscript{xi}

4. Our network served nearly 1 in 6 Ohioans in the last quarter half of which were served were seniors or children.

3. 42\% of the Ohioans standing in food pantry lines are cutting the number and size of their meals which confirms that too many, not too few, are in true need.\textsuperscript{xii}

2. The consequences of increasing hunger and malnutrition are severe. Ohio will experience lower productivity, loss of educational attainment and astronomical health care costs.\textsuperscript{xiii} Children who are hungry simply cannot concentrate, have low energy and reduced ability to fight off common childhood illnesses.\textsuperscript{xiv} Hunger and poverty impair the ability of older adults to live safely and independently in their homes.\textsuperscript{xv}

1. Expanding the state’s investment in programs that have proven results benefits an increasing number of hungry Ohioans of all ages, provides indirect benefits to farmers and local communities, and is a fiscally responsible choice to be included in the 2012-2013 State Budget.

\textsuperscript{i} PAPER PLATE: “Lost business and lost my family. Became a part-time Dad. Selling everything I own just to pay bills. I know there are [others] worse off than me, but why should there be?” –Food Pantry Recipient from Tri-County Community Action Commission of Champaign, Logan and Shelby counties
In recognition of these uncertain times, rapidly rising fuel and food costs, skyrocketing demand for emergency food assistance, and the health care cost savings that increased food security and access to healthy foods will bring to Ohio, we request your support for an additional $4.5 million per year (an additional $9 million over the 2012-2013 biennial) to support the continuation of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks highly successful public/private partnership. *This modest and humble request represents less than one dollar per person, per month, served by the emergency food assistance network.*

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and for your past and continued support for this critical program. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Respectfully submitted by
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x USDA. http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR73/ERR73d.pdf
xi Ohio Department of Education. Revised October 2010. MR-81 data.
xiv Nord, "Food Insecurity in Households with Children: Prevalence, Severity, and Household Characteristics." USDA.