#### 110TH CONGRESS 2D SESSION

# H. R. 6127

To require the President to call a White House Conference on Food and Nutrition.

### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 22, 2008

Mr. McGovern (for himself, Mrs. Emerson, Ms. Solis, Mr. LaHood, Mr. Pomeroy, and Mr. Moran of Kansas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

## A BILL

To require the President to call a White House Conference on Food and Nutrition.

- 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
- 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
- 3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
- 4 This Act may be cited as the "The White House Con-
- 5 ference on Food and Nutrition".
- 6 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.
- 7 The Congress finds the following:
- 8 (1) Hunger and undernutrition are political
- 9 conditions that can be solved.

- 1 (2) Access to healthy food and good nutrition 2 should be a fundamental right of all Americans.
  - (3) Nearly 40 years have passed since the United States convened a White House conference to comprehensively address the issues of food, hunger, health, and nutrition in America.
    - (4) More than 35,500,000 Americans live in households that face a constant struggle against hunger, 12,600,000 of whom are children and 5,000,000 of whom are seniors, the disabled, and the critically ill.
    - (5) The Government spends more than \$55,000,000,000 every year responding to the concurrent epidemics of hunger and undernutrition, yet the number of Americans facing hunger continues to grow and our Nation's nutritional health is declining.
    - (6) Conservative cost estimates show that the true cost of hunger and illness related to undernutrition in America is at least \$90,000,000,000 a year, more than half of which is paid by Medicare and Medicaid.
    - (7) Appropriate food and nutrition can save the United States billions of dollars in health care costs by preventing or delaying the progression to late-

- 1 stage disease for tens of millions of Americans who
- 2 live with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, HIV,
- 3 AIDS, and heart disease. The costs of the effects
- 4 and treatments of those diseases are significantly ex-
- 5 acerbated by hunger, food insecurity, and under-
- 6 nutrition.
- 7 (8) A national discussion of the root causes of
- 8 hunger, food insecurity, and undernutrition, as well
- 9 as identification of solutions to these epidemics, can
- lead to action to implement such solutions and to
- 11 end hunger in America.

#### 12 SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE.

- 13 (a) Authority To Call Conference.—Not later
- 14 than December 31, 2010, the President shall call the
- 15 White House Conference on Food and Nutrition (in this
- 16 Act referred to as the "Conference") to be convened not
- 17 later than 18 months after the selection of the Policy Com-
- 18 mittee established in section 4, in order to make funda-
- 19 mental policy recommendations on ways to end hunger
- 20 and to improve nutrition in the United States and to im-
- 21 plement the purposes set forth in subsection (c).
- 22 (b) Planning and Direction.—The Secretary of
- 23 Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Agriculture,
- 24 and the Secretary of the Treasury (in this Act referred

- to as the "Cochairs") shall plan, conduct, and convene the
   Conference, in consultation with the Surgeon General.
- 3 (c) Purposes of the Conference.—The purposes
  4 of the Conference are to—
- (1) identify viable solutions for ending hunger
  in the United States;
  - (2) review the current structure, scope, and effectiveness of existing legislation and programs at the Federal, State, and local levels that provide for the nutritional needs of food-insecure people living in the United States;
    - (3) determine the extent to which current Federal, State, and local programs that provide for the nutritional health of Americans can better use available resources and ensure greater coordination among such programs;
    - (4) identify new ways to utilize the abundant agricultural resources of the United States to meet the nutritional needs of all Americans;
    - (5) highlight emerging and innovative programs from the public and private sectors, including community-based and faith-based organizations that effectively address the nutrition needs of vulnerable Americans and recommend such programs as can be reasonably and cost-effectively replicated;

- 1 (6) identify opportunities for effective partner-2 ships between the Government, industry, labor, 3 healthcare, and the nonprofit sectors to fight hunger 4 in the United States;
  - (7) explore the possibility of creating a Federal office within the Department of Agriculture to oversee the Nation's response to persistent and widespread hunger and food insecurity, to include the oversight and coordination of all Federal, State, and local antihunger programs;
  - (8) bring public attention to the more than 35,500,000 people living in the United States that face a constant struggle against hunger, food insecurity, and inadequate nutrition;
  - (9) illustrate the medical, developmental, and educational impact of hunger, food insecurity, and inadequate nutrition, and the potential savings to the United States health care system, educational system, and other sectors when appropriate food is available to the critically and chronically ill;
  - (10) build understanding of the true cost of hunger in the United States, to include lost wages, diminished stamina, reduced capacity to learn, and the impact of despair; and

1	(11) build understanding that the ever-bur-
2	geoning dual epidemic of hunger and undernutrition
3	is a matter of national security.
4	SEC. 4. POLICY COMMITTEE; RELATED COMMITTEES.
5	(a) Establishment.—Not later than June 30,
6	2009, there is established a Policy Committee comprising
7	of 17 members to be selected as follows:
8	(1) Presidential appointees.—Nine mem-
9	bers shall be selected by the President and shall in-
10	clude—
11	(A) 3 members who are officers or employ-
12	ees of the United States, including the Surgeon
13	General; and
14	(B) 6 members with experience in address-
15	ing the needs of food-insecure and undernour-
16	ished people in the United States.
17	(2) House appointees.—
18	(A) Two members shall be selected by the
19	Speaker of the House of Representatives after
20	consultation with the chairperson of the Com-
21	mittee on Education and Labor, the chair-
22	person of the Committee on Ways and Means,
23	and the chairperson of the Committee on Agri-
24	culture, of the House of Representatives.

1	(B) Two members shall be selected by the
2	minority leader of the House of Representa-
3	tives, after consultation with the ranking minor-
4	ity members of such committees.
5	(3) Senate appointees.—
6	(A) Two members shall be selected by the
7	majority leader of the Senate, after consultation
8	with members of the Committee on Health,
9	Education, Labor, and Pensions, the Committee
10	on Agriculture, and the Committee on Finance,
11	of the Senate.
12	(B) Two members shall be selected by the
13	minority leader of the Senate, after consultation
14	with members of such committees.
15	(b) Voting; Chairperson.—
16	(1) The Policy Committee shall act by the vote
17	of a majority of the members present. A quorum of
18	Committee members shall not be required to conduct
19	Committee business.
20	(2) The Surgeon General shall serve as the
21	chairperson of the Policy Committee. The chair-
22	person may vote only to break a tie vote of the other
23	members of the Policy Committee.
24	(c) Duties of the Policy Committee.—The Pol-
25	icy Committee shall initially meet at the call of the Co-

- 1 chairs, not later than 30 days after the last member is
- 2 selected under subsection (a). Subsequent meetings of the
- 3 Policy Committee shall be held at the call of the chair-
- 4 person. Through meetings, hearings, and working ses-
- 5 sions, the Policy Committee shall—
- 6 (1) make recommendations to the Cochairs to
- 7 facilitate the timely convening of the Conference;
- 8 (2) submit to the Cochairs a proposed agenda
- 9 for the Conference not later than 90 days after the
- first meeting of the Policy Committee;
- 11 (3) make recommendations for the delegates of
- the Conference;
- 13 (4) establish the number of delegates to be se-
- lected under section 5; and
- 15 (5) establish an executive committee consisting
- of 3 members of the Policy Committee to work with
- delegates of the Conference.

#### 18 SEC. 5. CONFERENCE DELEGATES.

- To carry out the purposes of the Conference, the Co-
- 20 chairs shall bring together delegates representative of the
- 21 spectrum of thought in the field of food and nutrition,
- 22 without regard to political affiliation or past partisan ac-
- 23 tivity, who shall include—
- 24 (1) representatives of Federal, State, and local
- 25 governments;

1 (2) professional people and laypeople who are 2 working in the field of food, health, nutrition, and 3 economic security; and 4 (3) representatives of the general public who 5 are affected by hunger in the United States. 6 SEC. 6. CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION. 7 (a) Administration.—In administering this section, 8 the Cochairs shall— 9 (1) provide written notice to all members of the 10 Policy Committee of each meeting, hearing, or work-11 ing session of such Committee not later than 48 12 hours before the occurrence of such meeting, hear-13 ing, or working session; 14 (2) request the cooperation and assistance of 15 the heads of such other Federal departments and 16 agencies as may be appropriate, including the detail-17 ing of personnel; 18 (3) make available for public comment a pro-19 posed agenda prepared by the Policy Committee, 20 which will reflect to the greatest extent possible the 21 major issues facing the field of food and nutrition 22 consistent with the purposes of the Conference set

forth in section 3(c);

- (4) prepare and make available background materials that the Cochairs deem necessary for the use
   of delegates to the Conference; and
  - (5) employ such additional personnel as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act without regard to provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and without regard to chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.
- 11 (b) DUTIES.—In carrying out the Cochairs's respon-12 sibilities and functions under this section, the Cochairs 13 shall ensure that—
  - (1) the proposed agenda prepared under subsection (a)(3) is published in the Federal Register not later than 30 days after such agenda is approved by the Policy Committee;
  - (2) the personnel employed under subsection (a)(5) are fairly balanced in terms of points of views represented and are appointed without regard to political affiliation or previous partisan activities;
  - (3) the recommendations of the Conference are not inappropriately influenced by any public official or by any special interest, but instead are the result

1	of the independent and collective judgment of the
2	delegates of the Conference; and
3	(4) before the Conference is convened—
4	(A) current and adequate statistical data
5	(including decennial census data) and other in-
6	formation on food and nutrition in the United
7	States; and
8	(B) such information as may be necessary
9	to evaluate Federal programs and policies relat-
10	ing to food and nutrition;
11	which the Cochairs may obtain by making grants to
12	or entering into an agreement with, public agencies
13	or nonprofit organizations, are readily available in
14	advance of the Conference to the delegates.
15	(c) Gifts.—The Cochairs may accept, on behalf of
16	the United States, gifts (in cash or in kind, including vol-
17	untary and uncompensated services), which shall be avail-
18	able to carry out this Act. Gifts of cash shall be available
19	in addition to amounts appropriated to carry out this title.
20	Gifts may be earmarked by the donor or the executive
21	committee for a specific purpose.
22	(d) Records.—The Cochairs shall maintain records
23	regarding—
24	(1) the sources, amounts, and uses of gifts ac-
25	cepted under subsection (c); and

1	(2) the identity of each person receiving assist-
2	ance to carry out this Act, and the amount of such
3	assistance received by each such person.
4	SEC. 7. REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE.
5	(a) Preliminary Report.—Not later than 100 days
6	after the Conference adjourns, the Policy Committee shall
7	prepare a preliminary report on the Conference which
8	shall be published in the Federal Register and submitted
9	to the chief executive officers of the States. The Policy
10	Committee shall request that the chief executive officers
11	of the States submit to the Policy Committee, not later
12	than 45 days after receiving such report, their views and
13	findings on such report.
14	(b) Final Report.—Not later than 6 months after
15	the date on which the Conference adjourns, the Policy
16	Committee shall—
17	(1) prepare a final report of the Conference
18	which shall include a compilation of the views and
19	findings of the chief executive officers of the States
20	received under subsection (a); and
21	(2) publish in the Federal Register, and trans-
22	mit to the President and to Congress, the rec-
23	ommendations for the administrative action and the
24	legislation necessary to implement the recommenda-

tions contained in such report.

#### 1 SEC. 8. STATUS REPORTS.

- 2 (a) Initial Status Report.—Not later than 2
- 3 years after the date on which the Conference adjourns,
- 4 the Surgeon General shall—
- 5 (1) prepare a status report documenting the im-
- 6 plementation of the recommendations contained in
- 7 the final report described in section 7(b)(1); and
- 8 (2) publish in the Federal Register, and trans-
- 9 mit to the President and to Congress, such status
- report.
- 11 (b) Subsequent Status Reports.—Not later than
- 12 5 years after the date on which the Conference adjourns,
- 13 and every 5 years thereafter until all recommendations in
- 14 the final report described in section 7(b)(1) are achieved,
- 15 the Comptroller General shall—
- 16 (1) prepare a status report documenting the im-
- plementation of the recommendations contained in
- such final report; and
- 19 (2) publish in the Federal Register, and trans-
- 20 mit to the President and to Congress, such status
- 21 report.

#### 22 SEC. 9. DEFINITION OF STATE.

- For the purposes of this Act, the term "State" means
- 24 any of the several States, the District of Columbia, the
- 25 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa,

1	the Virgin Islands of the United States, or the Common-
2	wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
3	SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.
4	(a) Authorization.—
5	(1) In general.—There are authorized to be
6	appropriated to carry out this Act—
7	(A) such sums as may be necessary for the
8	first fiscal year in which the Policy Committee
9	plans the Conference and for the following fis-
10	cal year; and
11	(B) such sums as may be necessary for the
12	fiscal year in which the Conference is held.
13	(2) Limitation.—Any new spending authority
14	or new authority to enter into contracts under this
15	Act, and under which the United States is obligated
16	to make outlays, shall be effective only to the extent,
17	and in such amounts, as are provided in advance in
18	appropriations Acts.
19	(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—
20	(1) In general.—Except as provided in para-
21	graph (3), funds appropriated to carry out this Act
22	and funds received as gifts under section 6(c) shall
23	remain available for obligation or expenditure until
24	the expiration of the 1-year period beginning on the
25	date the Conference adjourns.

(2) Unobligated funds.—Except as provided
in paragraph (3), any such funds neither expended
nor obligated before the expiration of the 1-year pe-
riod beginning on the date the Conference adjourns
shall be returned to the United States Treasury.

(3) Conference not convened.—If the Conference is not convened before December 31, 2010, a trust fund shall be established and such funds shall only be available for a future Conference on Food and Nutrition.

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