



August 10, 2011



California Congressional Delegation

Dear California Delegation Member:



The undersigned organizations write to urge your **vigilance in protecting the growing number of low-income Californians from further federal budget cuts**. The undersigned organizations represent a broad range of California service providers, anti-hunger, anti-poverty, health, disability rights, senior, immigrants' rights, and parent groups. We are united in opposition to any cuts that undermine the social safety net as a means to reducing the federal deficit.



The federal deficit must not be balanced on the backs of our most vulnerable citizens. With economic recovery slowing, cost of living rising, and unemployment in California remaining at an unacceptable 11.8%, the imperative for the federal government to maintain a strong social safety net is greater than ever. Our organizations have witnessed an unprecedented increase in hardship in the communities we serve, and it is abundantly clear that we cannot cover the gap if vital public benefit and entitlement programs are cut.



Due to California's own budget shortfalls, state funding for healthcare, affordable housing and social services has been cut by \$15 billion in the last three years alone. These cuts contribute to further weakening of the economy by their negative impact on jobs, according to research by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Further erosion of the social safety net from federal cuts can only be expected to contribute to greater hardship and a weaker economy.



Preventing program cuts and raising revenue are two sides of the same coin, and we believe any deficit reduction agreement must include new revenue to reduce the need for program cuts. We urge your support for a balanced and equitable package of deficit reduction solutions. The growing numbers of low-income Californians are counting on your support.



Sincerely,

California Association of Food Banks
California Food Policy Advocates
California Hunger Action Coalition (CHAC)
County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA)
Health & Human Services Network of California
San Diego Hunger Coalition
Western Center on Law & Poverty