



**2011 Ecumenical Advocacy Days:
Development, Security & Economic Justice:
What's Gender Got to Do with It?
Budget Background**

*"Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates." -
Proverbs 31*

Programs that serve those in poverty domestically and around the world are vital to the health, security, and well being of women in particular, as noted in the "Talking Points." Below are some impacts of cuts proposed in House versions of funding through the rest of 2011 (H.R. 1). Your group may want to use some of these while addressing your members of Congress.

Members of your group may point to people who will be harmed if these programs are not funded at 2010 levels:

- Women and small children who receive benefits through the ***Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)***, will be at risk of losing benefits as food costs and the costs of operating the program increase this year.
- Over 200,000 low-income children under the age of five would lose the education, health, nutrition, and other services provided by ***Head Start***;
- 81,000 people, mostly low-income elders, would no longer receive food baskets due to cuts in the ***Commodity Supplemental Food Program***.
- Of the 14,000 people relying on section 811 vouchers that enable low-income individuals with disabilities to afford housing, 10,000 would lose their vouchers;
- At a time of rising global food prices, cuts to food aid and to the ***Development Assistance*** Account's global agriculture programs which especially benefit women farmers will leave millions of hungry children, women and men dying and desperate.
- Refugees and survivors of conflicts, human rights abuses and natural disasters receiving U.S. funding through the ***International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugee*** Accounts will go without emergency food, health care, safe shelter, and clean water.
- Vulnerable families in poor countries whose homes have become endangered, whose water supply is diminished and whose farms are less productive because of the impact of ***climate change***, will not receive help through to adapt to their new circumstances and rebuild their livelihoods.
- Cuts to ***PEPFAR (the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief)*** would result in 100,000 women not receiving medication to prevent the transmission of HIV to their newborn children and tens of thousands of babies would be born HIV positive; 400,000 people not receiving life-saving anti-retroviral treatment and 300,000 orphans and children being denied care and support.
- The world's poorest nations who have benefited from the ongoing ***debt cancellation*** mechanism will have many fewer resources freed up from debt service relief to invest in health care, education and clean water.

Here are some reasons members of your group can give for why Congress should fully fund these programs.

- A very small percentage of the budget, less than 14% domestically and less than 1% internationally, goes towards poverty-focused programs (this excludes Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security). Non-defense discretionary spending has had virtually no role in

creating the large deficits we see today, and cutting these programs will have little impact in curbing the deficit.

- The highest portions of the debt and current deficit are due to two unpaid-for wars and reduced revenue from both high unemployment and from tax expenditures (spending/breaks) to the wealthiest persons in the nation. Money needs to be secured through reductions in these areas.
- It is said that “We all need to share in the sacrifice,” however the poor and vulnerable have already sacrificed and have nothing left. A strong precedent exists for protecting the poor in the context of deficit reduction by exempting means-tested programs from cuts.
- Historically, Congress has protected the poor in the context of deficit reduction. In fact, the three major deficit-reduction packages of the last two decades — the 1990, 1993, and 1997 packages—reduced poverty and disadvantage by including substantial increases in the EITC (the 1990 and 1993 packages) and food stamps (1993), and by creating the Children’s Health Insurance Program (1997).
- Spending for programs that serve poor and vulnerable individuals provide effective economic growth. Low-income families are most likely to spend these benefits quickly and in their local communities, consequently creating and reducing the deficit. Cutting charitable programs will devastate those living in poverty, cost jobs, stress small local businesses, disrupt the fragile recovery, and in the long run will harm, not help, our fiscal situation.
- There is more suffering than ever before. Millions remain unemployed. Our Christian and moral values call us to protect funding for people who are already suffering.
- All of us in the United States will see our own well being and security placed at a great risk because of a less equal and more unstable society and a more insecure and desperate world.
- “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little”. *Franklin D. Roosevelt*