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“Working Hunger” Epidemic Still Engulfs 15 Million Americans; New National Report Details Americans Employed but Food Insecure

**New Mexico, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Maine
Have Highest Percentages of Working Hungry**

Increased Minimum Wage Correlates with Decreased Hunger

Southern, Conservative States Receive Most Federal Nutrition Aid

Approximately 15 million American adults lived in food insecure households with at least one person employed in the years 2014 to 2016, according to a new report by Hunger Free America based on an analysis of federal data. In other words, 15 million U.S. residents worked but still struggled against hunger. The report also found that states with higher minimum wages had lower levels of food insecurity among working people.

Said, Joel Berg, CEO of Hunger Free America, “While unemployment decreased and wages rose during the last few years of the Obama Administration, the United States still faced an epidemic of the ‘working hungry.’ This shameful data is the latest evidence that the American dream is seriously at risk unless we change our current economic and political policies nationwide. Low wages are still the top cause of U.S. hunger and malnutrition. The good news is this data proves that states that hiked their own minimum wages were less likely to have workers struggling against hunger.

Hunger Free America’s analysis of federal data also determined:

- The states with the highest rates of food insecurity among working adults were New Mexico (15.3%), Mississippi (14.0%), Louisiana (14.0%), Arkansas (13.5%), and Maine (12.9%).
- In states with a Minimum Wage of \$10 or above, 9.3% of the population was working hungry, compared to 10.3% in the states at \$7.25 or below.
- Approximately 34.5% of food insecure Americans are employed adults. This is approximately 4.7% of the entire US Population.
- California leads the nation in the highest numbers of food insecure adults at 1.8 million, followed by Texas (1.4 million), Florida (902,150), New York (841,625), and Ohio (594,635).
- Nearly 5.5 million, or one in 12, Americans over 60 are facing food insecurity.
- The federal government spent nearly \$91.3 billion on nutrition assistance programs for children, seniors, and adults in the 2016 Fiscal Year. The top ten states receiving the largest federal anti-hunger spending

per capita, are New Mexico, Louisiana, Hawaii, Mississippi, Georgia, Alaska, West Virginia, Alabama, South Carolina, and Florida.

Berg continued, “Disproving the stereotype that federal food benefit recipients are mostly in ‘inner cities’ or blue states, the states most reliant on this aid are Southern, highly Republican, states, often because their wages are so low. For instance, in Louisiana alone, where the state minimum wage is only \$7.25 per hour, federal nutrition aid equals \$430 per year for every resident of the state. This provides the latest evidence that it would be both hard-hearted and economically counter-productive for Congress to further slash these programs.”

The study, “Working America’s Still Hungry” National Hunger Report is available on Hunger Free America’s website, www.HungerFreeAmerica.org, through which anyone can also donate or volunteer, or find food if they need it.

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