



SNAP in the Farm Bill & Future of FoodShare Wisconsin

Nick Levendofsky
Government Relations Associate
Wisconsin Farmers Union



What is Wisconsin Farmers Union ?

A member-driven organization, committed to enhancing the quality of life for family farmers, rural communities, and all people through educational opportunities, cooperative endeavors, and civic engagement.

Our membership is made up of people from all walks of agriculture and life. From conventional to organic, rural to urban, our members find community in an organization that empowers them to have a voice in the issues that effect them.

WFU isn't just for farmers. We also welcome rural residents and consumers who want to participate in our programs and advocate for family farming.

SNAP Timeline

1939



Mrs. Mabel McFiggan is the first person to stand in line to make a food stamp purchase.

1961



President Kennedy signs his first Executive Order which initiates the food stamp pilot programs.

1964



President Johnson makes the Food Stamp Program permanent by signing the Food Stamp Act.



1977

President Carter signed the Food Stamp Act establishing national standards of eligibility and eliminating the purchase requirements.

1974

The Food Stamp Program expands to all 50 states and territories.



1984

Payment using Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) begins with the first EBT transaction purchase in Reading, PA.





2004

EBT use is adopted nationwide.

2008

The Food Stamp Program is renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).





Why is SNAP in the Farm Bill?





Sen. George McGovern (D)-SD & Sen. Bob Dole (R)-KS

“George McGovern was a friend of mine. We didn’t agree on a lot, but we agreed we had this great agricultural engine producing more food than we could consume. It was piled up in elevators and granaries. We thought, with people starving, that maybe there ought to be a way to help them. We produce enough food in this country of ours to feed millions more people. McGovern was the leader, and I was happy to work with him as the Republican. We believed it should be bipartisan. Most things that pass Congress of real importance are bipartisan.”

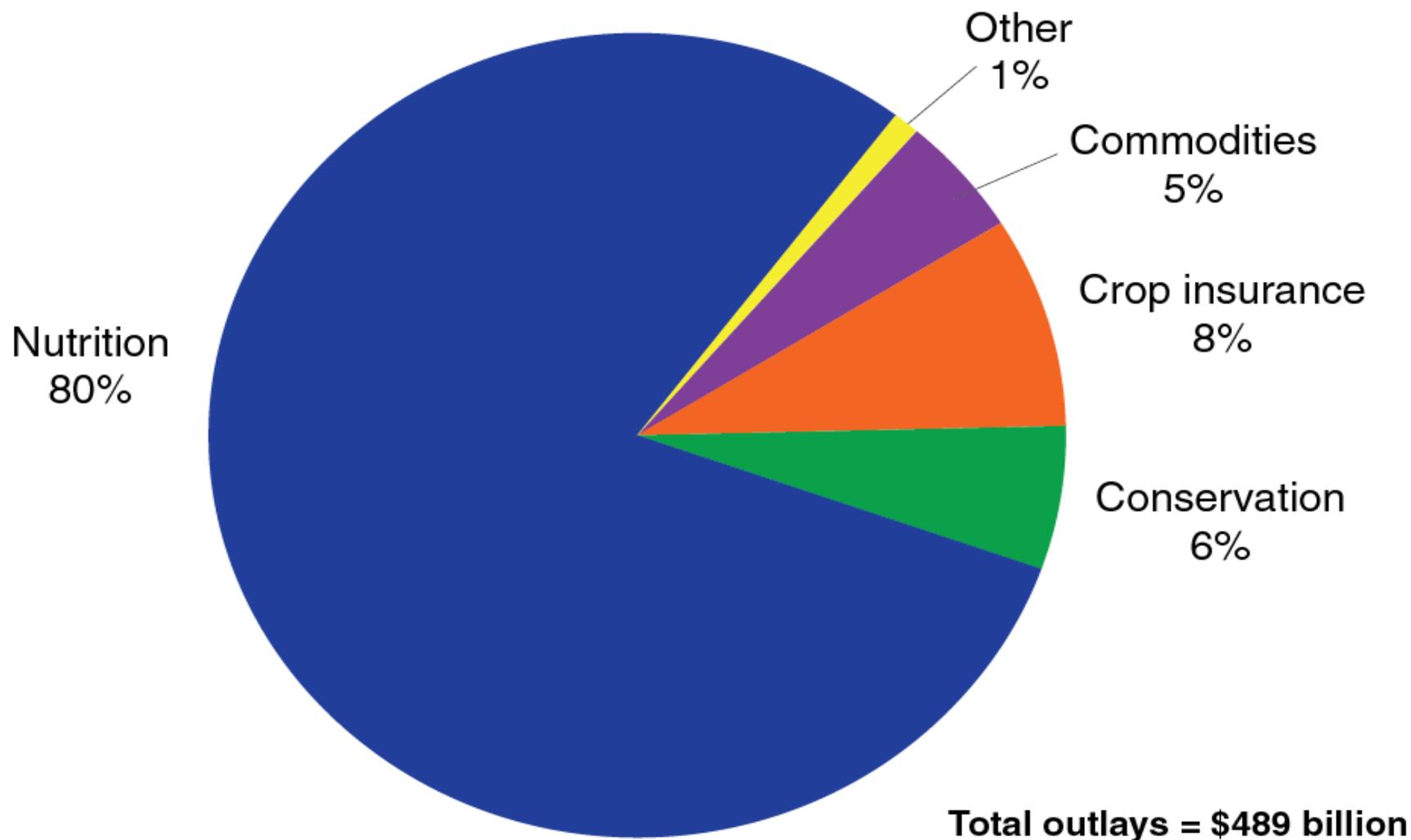
–Sen. Bob Dole 9/16/2016



When asked by a reporter, “Why would you put food stamps in the Farm Bill?,” Dole answered, **“Food and agriculture. Do they have something in common with each other?”**

- ~ Take SNAP out of the Farm Bill, last Farm Bill ever.
- ~ 80% of funding goes to food programs.
Removing them leaves USDA a shell of its former self.
- ~ No need for USDA on Cabinet level if SNAP is taken out of Farm Bill.

Projected outlays under the 2014 Farm Act, 2014-2018



Source: USDA Economic Research Service using data from Congressional Budget Office, Cost Estimates for the Agricultural Act of 2014, Jan 2014.

Trump Administration

“We are not interested in splitting the farm bill in two, as many Republicans have advocated.”

“SNAP doesn't need cuts, and instead should rely on the improving economy to reduce cost of the program.”

–Sam Clovis, Trump Campaign Advisor & White House Advisor to USDA

Since taking office, though, Trump has adopted Heritage Foundation budget recommendations

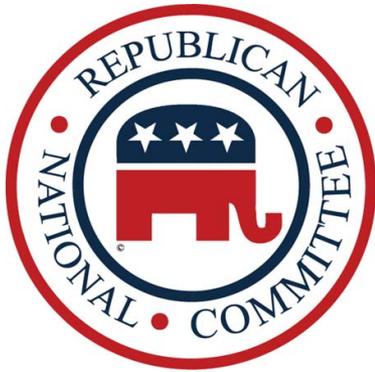
We must hold Trump & Co. accountable on this statement.



Broken Records



Heritage Foundation: Eliminate crop subsidies, revenue insurance, & separate SNAP from Farm Bill. “Farmers have the means and expertise to manage risk.”



RNC Platform: Separate nutrition programs from Farm Bill.



NFU: Keep farm and food programs together; Farm Bill should address needs, not a budget.

New Ag Secretary

Sonny Perdue

- ~ Former Governor of Georgia
- ~ Businessman (global commodities trade)
 - ~ Managing partner at AGrow Star
 - ~ Partner at Perdue Partners
- ~ Close friends with AFBF Pres. Zippy Duvall (both Georgians)



Much work to do:

- ~ Depressed farm economy
- ~ Two budgets to complete





“Proposals to convert SNAP into a block grant are misguided and would mean the program could no longer respond to economic conditions and serve all eligible Americans without drastically reducing benefits.

As Congress begins working on the 2018 Farm Bill, they must protect SNAP and resist pressure to weaken the program by turning it into an ineffective block grant.”

–Former USDA Sec. Tom Vilsack

Congress

Many MOC's who voted for 2014 Farm Bill not around

~ Senate - **50 of 68 Yeas** remain, **30 of 32 Nays** remain.

~ House - **175 of 251 Yeas** remain, **131 of 166 Nays** remain.

Senate Ag Committee

R's - 11, D's - 10

R's - Daines (Mont.) & Strange (Ala.)
replace Sasse (Neb.) & Tillis (N.C.)

D's - Add Van Hollen (Md.)

House Ag Committee

R's - 26, D's - 19

R's - 6 freshmen join

~ Roger Marshall (Kan.)

~ Jodey Arrington (Texas)

~ Neal Dunn (Fla.)

~ John Faso (N.Y.)

~ James Comer (Ky.)

~ Don Bacon (Neb.)

D's - 5 freshmen join

~ Al Lawson (Fla.)

~ Tom O'Halleran (Ariz.)

~ Jimmy Panetta (Calif.)

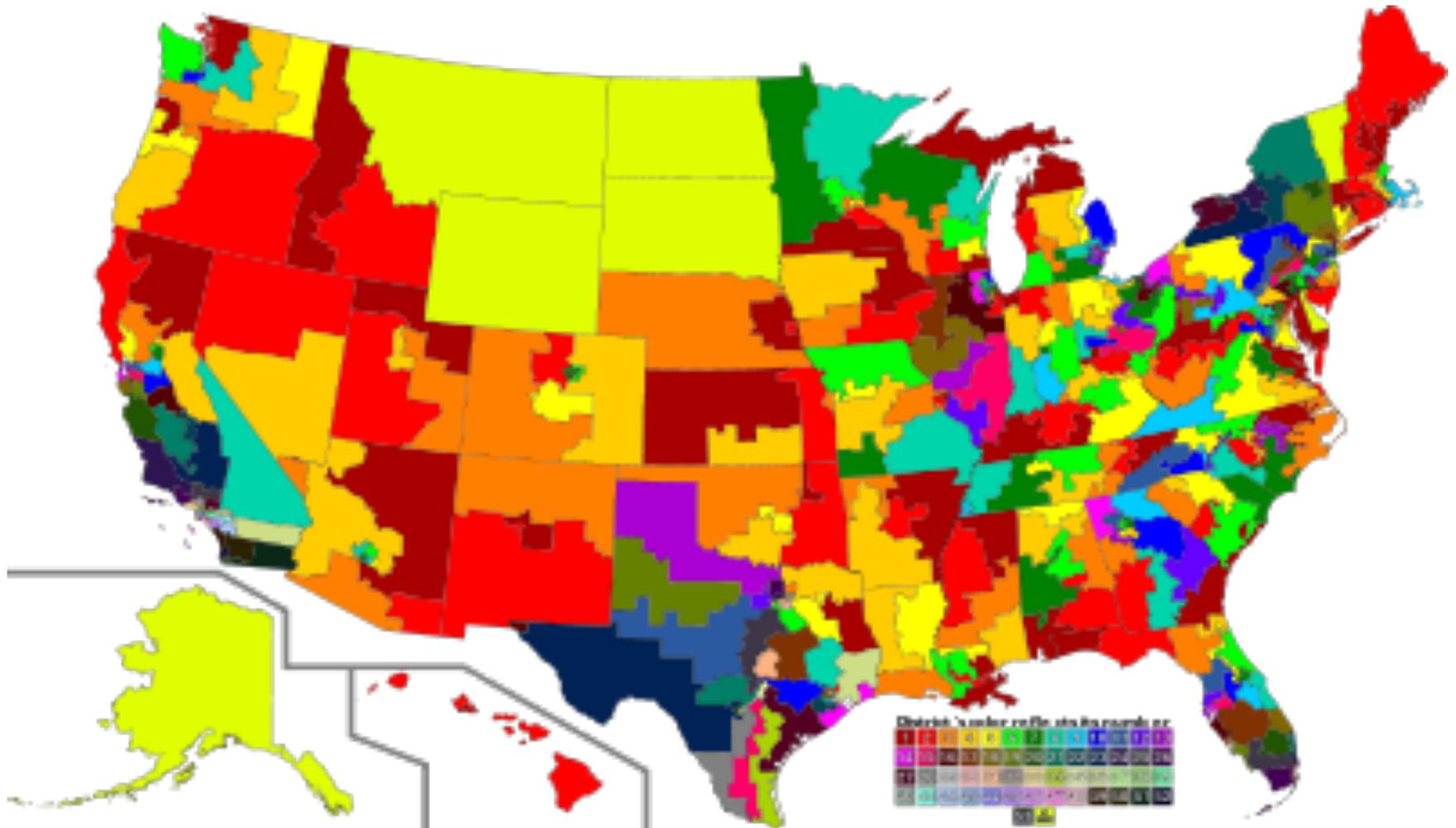
~ Darren Soto (Fla.)

~ Lisa Blunt Rochester

(Ala.)

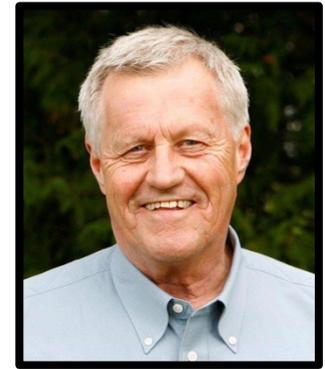
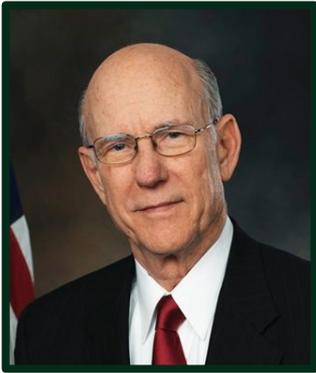


Out of 435 congressional districts,
only 35 are considered “rural.”



Ag Committees Leadership

~ Chairs and ranking members remain the same
Sens. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) & Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) & Reps. Mike Conaway (R-Texas & Collin Peterson (D-Minn.)



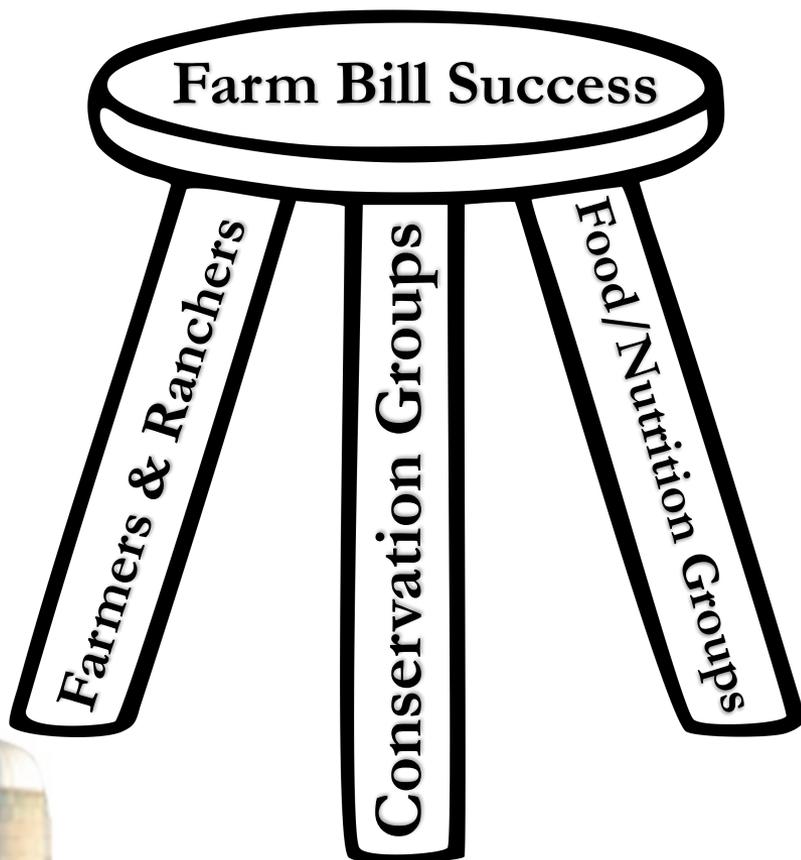
Senate

House



Farm Bill Alliances

Three-legged stool:



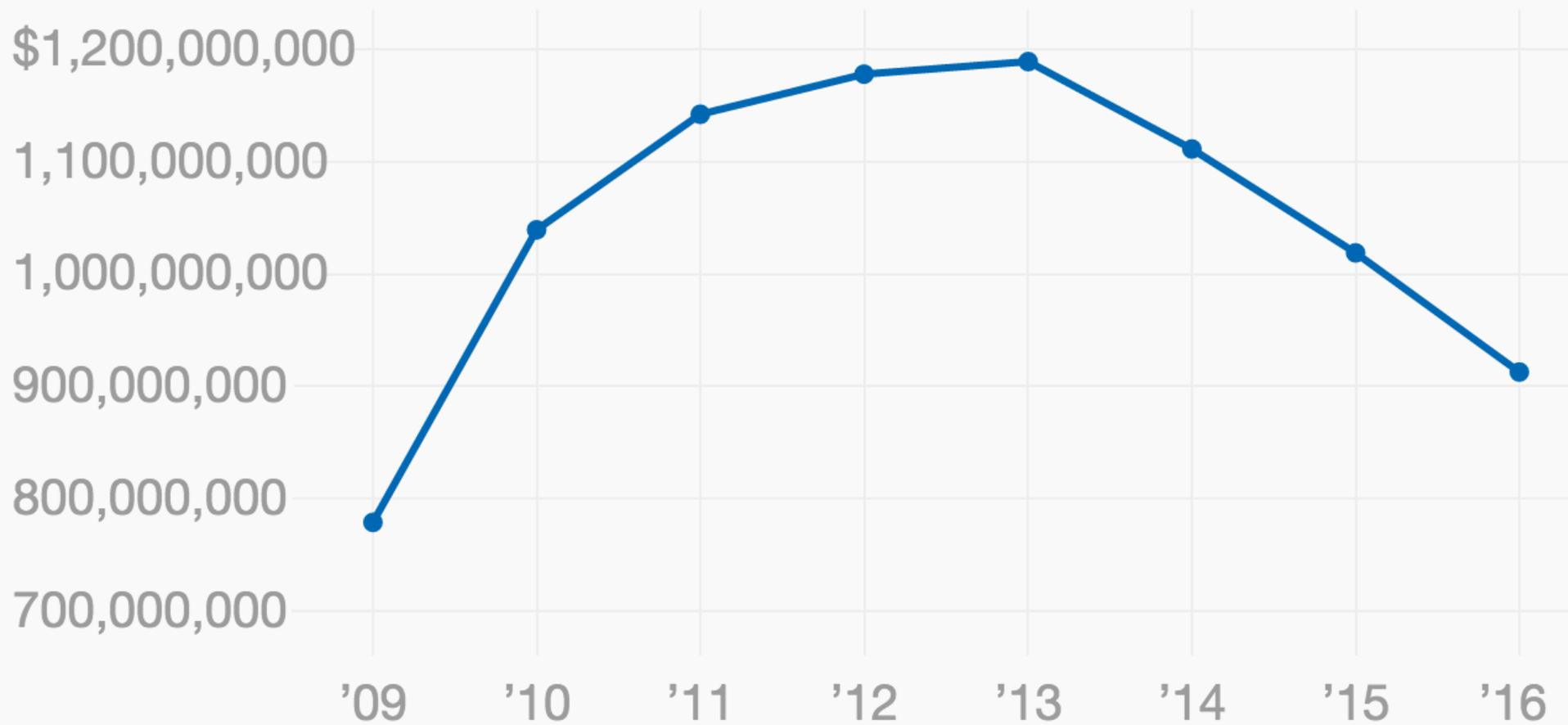
The Future of

FoodShare



WISCONSIN

FoodShare Benefits Paid To Wisconsinites, 2009-2016



△ T L △ S | Data: Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Wisconsin has paid out less in food-stamp benefits since 2013, but not because fewer people are hungry. More people are relying on support from food pantries, and some of that may be a result of changes to the state's food stamp policies.

Gov. Walker's 2017-19 Budget

- ~ Dramatically changes FoodShare program, gutting protections for families that truly need help.
- ~ FoodShare benefits are 100% federal money.
- ~ FoodShare can only be used for groceries and helps the most vulnerable people in our state.
- ~ Nearly half of FoodShare recipients are children and over 80% of families have worked within a year of receiving benefits.

5 things to know about Governor Walker's proposed budget:

1. The budget will increase hunger in Wisconsin

- ~ Proposed changes to FoodShare eligibility will impact over 100,000 people in Wisconsin, kicking tens of thousands off of food aid.

2. The budget spends \$150 million to expand a broken system

- ~ The current FoodShare Employment & Training (FSET) Program is broken. It needs to be fixed, not expanded to impact 100,000 parents.
- ~ The last budget spent nearly \$55 Million and kicked 64,000 people off FoodShare – this proposal will hurt even more people. The Governor's benchmarks will have taxpayers paying out-of-state job training companies \$8,694 for every job in 2017-18 and nearly \$16,000 per job in 2018-19.

3. “Dead-broke” vs. “dead-beat.” There is a difference

~ This budget eliminates FoodShare eligibility for parents not in compliance with child support. Parents are often “dead broke,” not “deadbeat.” A late child support payment does not mean a parent does not love or want to care for their child. Taking away food doesn’t help parents pay child support or feed their children.

4. Piles of paperwork = Piles of problems

~ FoodShare benefits will be denied for anyone not elderly, blind, or disabled whose household has over \$25,000 in liquid assets. The paperwork required to prove eligibility is daunting.

5. Childhood hunger will increase

- ~ While changes to FoodShare are intended for adults, kids will be the ones left with an empty plate. When parents lose access to food aid, their children go hungry.
- ~ When a parent receives a job-training requirement letter in a language he or she can't understand and loses benefits, the child goes hungry.
- ~ When a parent misses a child-support payment/is broke/can't catch up and loses benefits, child goes hungry.
- ~ When a parent cannot get the correct bank statements in order to prove they need help and loses benefits, the child goes hungry.

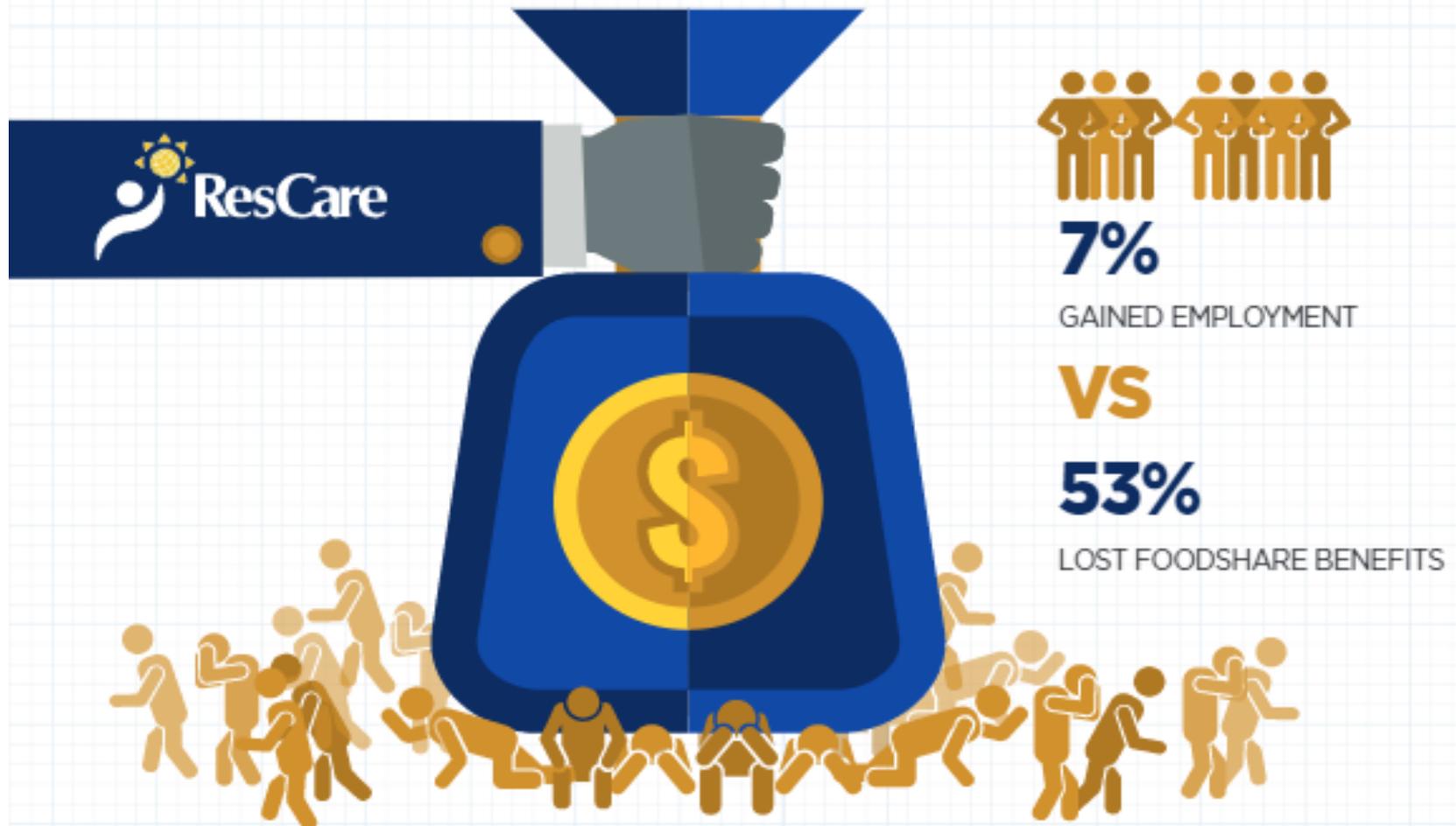
Work requirements already exist

Ever since President Clinton worked with Congressional Republicans to pass the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act in 1996, it's been the law of the land that "able-bodied adults without dependents" must work or take part in job-training programs to keep their benefits beyond a specified time limit.

In the case of food stamps, the time spent working or in training must add up to 80 hours per month.

FOODSHARE EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING PROGRAM (FSET)

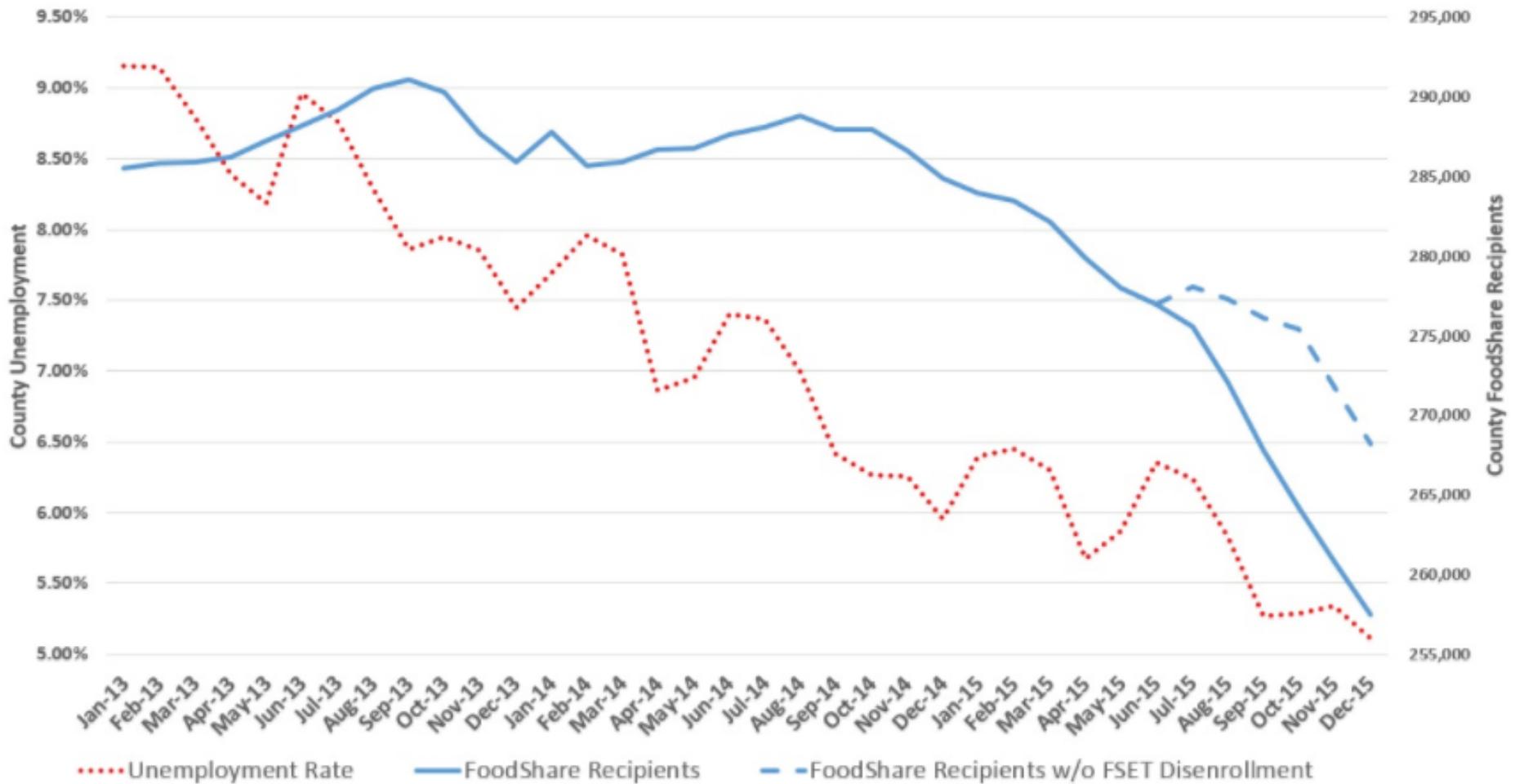
Pushing People Into Dependency



A harsh reality...

“I CAN SEE THAT THE IDEA WITH A MANDATORY WORKFORCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS TO GET PEOPLE OFF NEEDING ASSISTANCE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. BUT I ALSO WONDER IF THIS IS SOMETHING DESIGNED TO FORCE PEOPLE OFF ASSISTANCE AND DIMINISH THE EXPENSE OF THE BENEFIT?” - TONY, FSET PARTICIPANT

Milwaukee County FoodShare Participation and Unemployment Rate



The above graph looks at the Milwaukee County unemployment rate and number of FoodShare recipients in 2015. Thanks to FSET data released by DHS, we can project what FoodShare recipient numbers would have looked like in the county without disenrollment from FSET. Milwaukee County has the highest percentage of FoodShare disenrollment of the 11 FSET regions across the state.

HUNGER TASK FORCE ANALYSIS:

After a review of FSET outcomes and the impact the program will have on hunger, Hunger Task Force offers the following recommendations:



End mandatory work requirements for Milwaukee County and establish voluntary training programs that provide true training and job placement.



Invest in the Wisconsin Technical College System and local companies to provide training and placement with employers in Milwaukee.



Terminate the ResCare contract for non-performance and restore FoodShare benefits to those that reapply to curb wide-scale hunger.



Invest in consumer education to inform unemployed people what their options are for employment and training.

Everything you needed to know to oppose

BLOCK GRANTS OF NUTRITION PROGRAMS

why they are bad but were afraid to ask

Currently, the federal government promises to provide nutrition assistance to any eligible family that applies and qualifies for help.

In return, states must adhere to strict performance benchmarks, efficiency standards and other accountability measures to ensure program integrity.



Federal Government



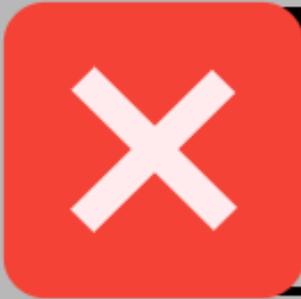
State Government



This structure enables these programs to be "elastic."



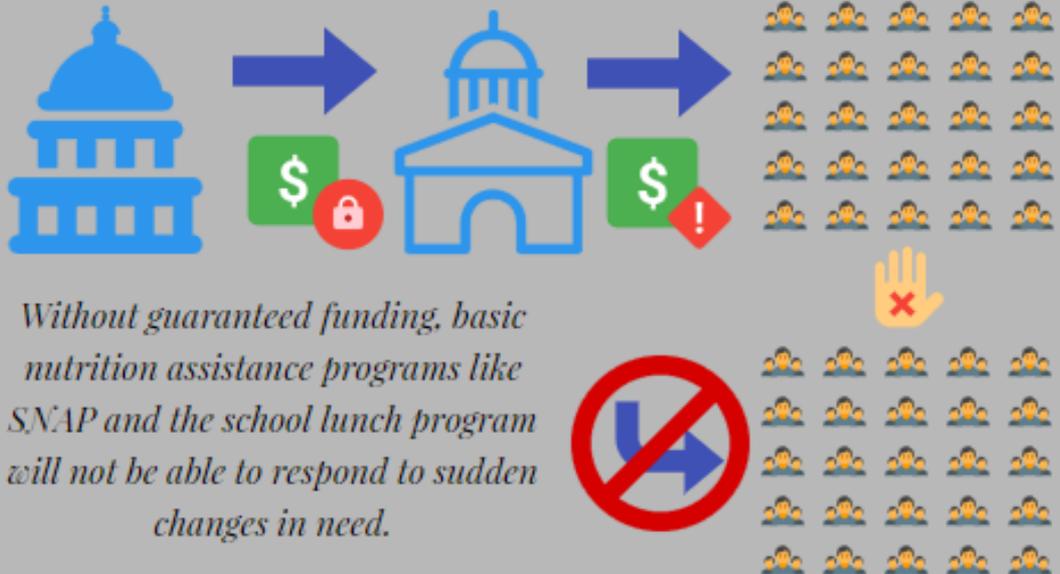
They shrink when times are good but can quickly expand to enroll new participants when times are bad.



BLOCK GRANTS CHANGE THIS

BY CAPPING AVAILABLE FUNDS &
REDUCING STATE RESPONSIBILITY

This breaks the promise that any family in need who applies and qualifies will get the nutrition assistance they need to work, learn and live healthier lives.



Drug testing for benefits

Utah

Cost Of Testing

\$64,566

9,552

Welfare
Applicants

29

Positive
Drug Tests

August 2012-July 2014

Drug testing for benefits

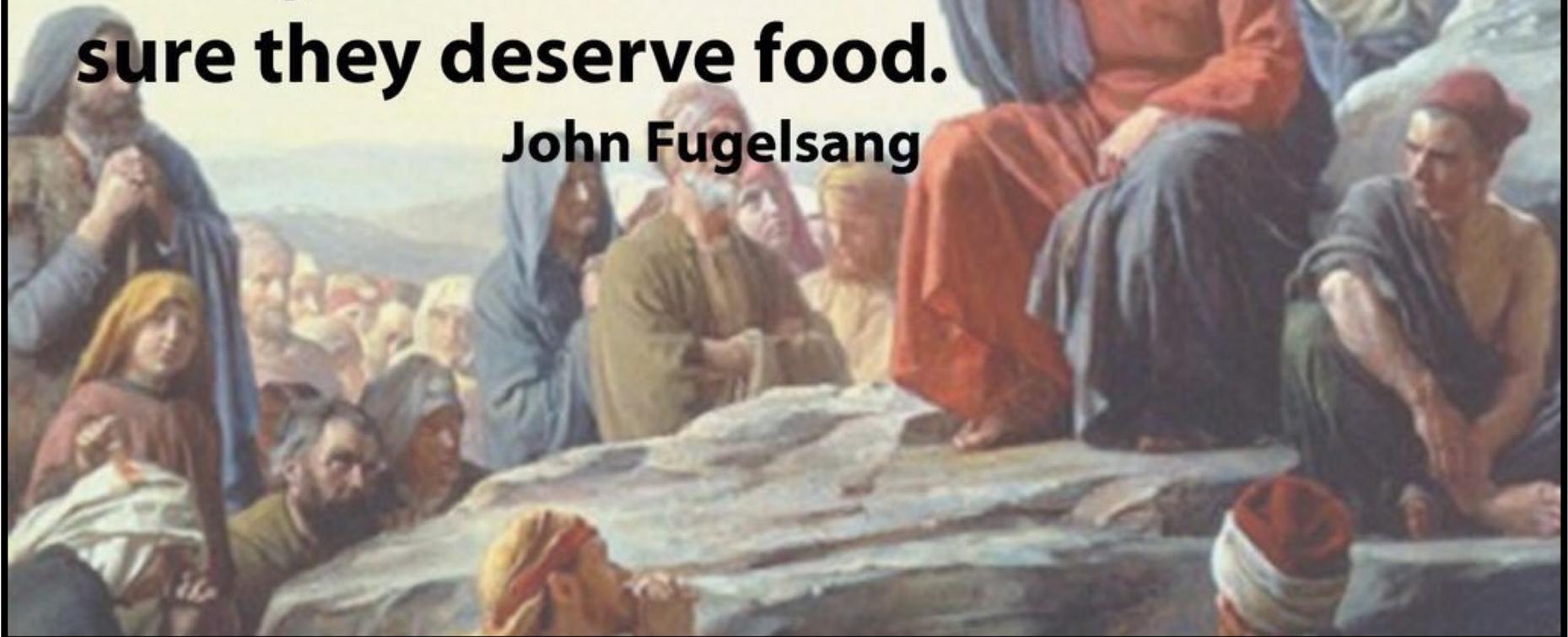
I'm for it, as long as Wisconsin state legislators have to abide by the same rules. They also have to figure out how to pay for it without raising taxes or robbing from vital programs.

Here's an idea: let's stop punishing children for the sins of parents. Stop beating up the poor. Stop telling people to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" when they can't even afford boots.

Feed the children. Feed the elderly. Feed the disabled. Feed struggling working families. **Period.**

**My favorite Bible story is when
Jesus feeds the multitudes
after administering
a drug test to make
sure they deserve food.**

John Fugelsang



Wisconsin Farm to School



#SAVEWIF2S

How do you affect the process?

- ~ Attend town hall meetings/events & ask questions
- ~ Join an organization you believe can make a difference
- ~ Participate in lobby/advocacy days in Madison/D.C.
- ~ Invite the official for a tour of your farm/facility/meeting
- ~ Contact elected official(s) by phone/email
- ~ Get to know staff members & develop relationship
- ~ Letters/post cards (Fax D.C.)
- ~ Visit Madison, D.C., or district office
- ~ Letter to Editor in local paper
- ~ Facebook/Twitter – marginally
- ~ Generic/form letter email ☹
- ~ Petition/March/Rally
- ~ Snarky memes (optional)

Stay Up-To Date!

Understand the issues:

- ~ E-Updates
- ~ News Releases
- ~ Farmer's Share
- ~ Blog



Keep Up-To-Date with WFU's Activities:

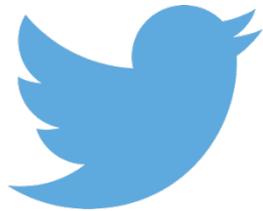
- ~ E-Newsletter
- ~ Social Media

www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/news-events

Connect With Us!



@WIFarmersUnion



@wifarmersunion



@wifarmersunion

www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com



UNITED TO GROW FAMILY AGRICULTURE

Thank you!

