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Food and Nutrition for Low-Income Families

WHEREAS, the Food Stamp Program provides a basic safety net to millions of families and children, including many low wage workers, through monthly benefits, earmarked for food purchases, to eligible low-income families; and

WHEREAS, more than 87 percent of food stamp benefits go to households with children; and

WHEREAS, nearly 90 percent of food stamp households have income below the poverty line; and 12 million American children were living in households that experience hunger or were at risk of hunger in 1999, according to estimates based on the data collected in the Food Security Supplement of the U.S. Bureau of Census Current Population Survey; and

WHEREAS, legal immigrants have been denied food stamp benefits, there has been an increase in hunger in immigrant communities and among children of legal immigrants; and

WHEREAS, discriminating based on immigrant status has undermined the food stamp program from doing its job fully; failing to prevent hunger among many of America's families and America's children simply because they have legally immigrated to the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, in our rapidly declining economy, providing food assistance to needy families not only provides nutrition, it also helps to spread scarce family dollars to fund other pressing family needs, as well as dispersing dollars to assist in reinvigorating the economy; therefore be it:

RESOLVED that the AFL-CIO and its member unions support and urge Congress and the Administration to strengthen and reauthorize the Food Stamp Program; and be it further

RESOLVED that the AFL-CIO and its member unions urge Congress and the Administration to restore eligibility to needy legal immigrants, increase benefit levels, especially for elderly persons and families with children, and support expanded outreach to eligible people; and be it further

RESOLVED that the AFL-CIO and its member unions commend Senators Kennedy and Specter for their introduction of The Nutrition Assistance Act for Working Families and Seniors Act of 2001, S. 583, and commend Senator Lugar for his introduction of the Farm and Ranch Equity Act (S.1571) as positive proposals which would, among other things, reauthorize and strengthen the Food Stamp Program; and be it finally

RESOLVED that the AFL-CIO and its member unions urge Congress and the Administration in farm bill and economic stimulus packages to reauthorize the Food Stamp Program as a federal program while improving access to and adequacy of benefits as well as strengthening food stamp eligibility and benefits to help low-income and unemployed families.