Minnesota FoodShare
1001 East Lake Street
P.O. Box 7509
Minneapolis, MN 55407
Phone: 612-276-1530
Fax: 612-276-1534
mnfoodshare.gmcc.org
A program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches

December 3, 2012

Senator Al Franken
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Franken:

As the interfaith-based Council of Sponsors for Minnesota FoodShare, an organization that works to fight hunger in Minnesota, we respectfully ask that you work with your Congressional colleagues to avoid targeting the most vulnerable among us as you seek to reach a compromise on the so-called "fiscal cliff" and pass the "Farm Bill." In particular, as advocates for the hungry, we ask that current levels of funding be preserved for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

While we recognize that our country must tackle its long term deficit, in the wake of the worst economy since the Great Depression we believe it is important to bear in mind that the current recipients of life-sustaining food supports are the people who have been hurt by the still weak economy, and not the cause of it. Accordingly, it is difficult for us to understand how cutting programs that help our poorest citizens purchase food will improve markets for Minnesota's farmers or retailers, prepare a child for school success, make a mom or dad a better parent, or do anything to strengthen our nation.

As way of background, you should know that for over thirty years our Council has represented Protestants, Catholics and Jews from throughout Minnesota. Among our projects, we are proud to work annually with the Minnesota FoodShare to carry out the March Campaign which just this past year engaged congregations, corporations, civic groups, schools and thousands of caring individuals in a statewide effort to raise nearly $8.5 million and over 4.4 million pounds of food. We're proud of this work to provide roughly half of the food distributed each year at nearly 300 food shelves statewide.

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As faith leaders we are humbled by the work we have done together to reduce hunger in Minnesota. The problem of hunger, however, persists and we know from experience that hunger solutions lie beyond the reach of religious and private charities. Moreover, we are concerned that the proposed cuts to SNAP would make our task all the more difficult. To wit, according to Bread for the World, we know that the cuts proposed in the House of Representatives to SNAP would mean on average that every church in America would have to raise approximately $50,000 to feed people each year for the next 10 years – in addition to what the congregations are already doing. Realistically, this seems very unlikely.

Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, we respectfully encourage you to stand with us and our faith partners from throughout Minnesota and the nation in opposing the proposed cuts to the most basic of food supports for the most vulnerable among us.

Sincerely,

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Steve Hunegs, Executive Director
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Rev. Patricia Lull, Executive Director
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December 3, 2012

Senator Amy Klobuchar
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

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December 3, 2012

Representative Michele Bachmann
103 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Bachmann:

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We also humbly request that you join Representatives Keith Ellison and Betty McCollum in co-sponsoring House Resolution 760, which rejects the provisions of House Resolution 683 that reduce the availability or amount of benefits provided under SNAP in effect under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.

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December 3, 2012

Representative Chip Cravaack
508 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Cravaack:

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December 3, 2012

Representative Keith Ellison
1027 Longworth Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Ellison:

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December 3, 2012

Representative John Kline
2439 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kline:

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December 3, 2012

Representative Betty McCollum
1714 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative McCollum:

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December 3, 2012

Representative Erik Paulsen
127 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Paulsen:

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December 3, 2012

Representative Collin Peterson
2211 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Peterson:

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Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas (JCRC)

Rev. Patricia Lull, Executive Director
St. Paul Area Council of Churches

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A program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches

December 3, 2012

Representative Tim Walz
1722 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Walz:

As the interfaith-based Council of Sponsors for Minnesota FoodShare, an organization that works to fight hunger in Minnesota, we respectfully ask that you work with your Congressional colleagues to avoid targeting the most vulnerable among us as you seek to reach a compromise on the so-called "fiscal cliff" and pass the "Farm Bill." In particular, as advocates for the hungry, we ask that current levels of funding be preserved for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

We also humbly request that you join Representatives Keith Ellison and Betty McCollum in co-sponsoring House Resolution 760, which rejects the provisions of House Resolution 683 that reduce the availability or amount of benefits provided under SNAP in effect under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.

While we recognize that our country must tackle its long term deficit, in the wake of the worst economy since the Great Depression we believe it is important to bear in mind that the current recipients of life-sustaining food supports are the people who have been hurt by the still weak economy, and not the cause of it. Accordingly, it is difficult for us to understand how cutting programs that help our poorest citizens purchase food will improve markets for Minnesota's farmers or retailers, prepare a child for school success, make a mom or dad a better parent, or do anything to strengthen our nation.

As way of background, you should know that for over thirty years our Council has represented Protestants, Catholics and Jews from throughout Minnesota. Among our projects, we are proud to work annually with the Minnesota FoodShare to carry out the March Campaign which just this past year engaged congregations, corporations, civic groups, schools and thousands of caring individuals in a statewide effort to raise nearly $8.5 million and over 4.4 million pounds of food. We're proud of this work to provide roughly half of the food distributed each year at nearly 300 food shelves statewide.

Minnesota FoodShare is engaged in other important activities. We work with community, backyard, and congregational gardeners who donate locally grown produce to their local food shelves; oversee Minneapolis mini-farmers markets that bring local produce to areas in the city that can benefit by access to fresh, healthy food; work to expand the number of sites that serve lunch to children during the summer; help plan a yearly conference to address the issue of food access for hungry Minnesotans, and more.

As faith leaders we are humbled by the work we have done together to reduce hunger in Minnesota. The problem of hunger, however, persists and we know from experience that hunger solutions lie beyond the reach of religious and private charities. Moreover, we are concerned that the proposed cuts to SNAP would make our task all the more difficult. To wit, according to Bread for the World, we know that the cuts proposed in the House of Representatives to SNAP would mean on average that every church in America would have to raise approximately $50,000 to feed people each year for the next 10 years – in addition to what the congregations are already doing. Realistically, this seems very unlikely.

Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, we respectfully encourage you to stand with us and our faith partners from throughout Minnesota and the nation in opposing the proposed cuts to the most basic of food supports for the most vulnerable among us.

Sincerely,

Jason Adkins, Executive Director
Minnesota Catholic Conference

Rev. Canon Peg Chemberlin, Executive Director
Minnesota Council of Churches

Steve Hunegs, Executive Director
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