

SB94 8



**HUNGER
TASK
FORCE**
of Milwaukee
SINCE 1974

May 8, 2001

State Senator Judy Robson
Chair, Senate Human Services and Aging Committee
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson:

I am writing to you in support of Senate Bill 94, legislation that would require the Department of Health and Family Services to award annual grants to food pantries that meet certain conditions.

Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee (HTFM) is a non-profit organization that distributes food to over 100 emergency feeding organizations in Milwaukee County. From 1999 to 2000, we experienced a 12.6% increase in the number of people served in our programs. Since 1995, we have experienced a 48.7% increase in the number of people served. We are currently serving over 40,000 people each month through our network, which is the largest number of people we have served in our 27-year history.

We support SB94 because there is a clear need to fund the front line of hunger relief providers throughout our state. Recent surveys within our programs indicate that the majority of our pantries are operated by elderly volunteers who utilize donated space and equipment. These programs normally garner food through individual food drives and food purchases from wholesalers. We know from these surveys that pantries do not get nearly enough food through these outlets to meet current demand.

When volunteer labor is not available or when food supplies run low, these pantries have to turn families away from their doors. SB94 would at least allow pantries faced with this dilemma to gain access to the resources they need to provide emergency assistance.

The basic philosophy behind this legislation, a philosophy we agree with, is that the state is responsible for providing basic services and resources that allow its citizens to live free from hunger. Wisconsin has the resources to make a dent in the hunger issue. Allowing food pantries the capability to help people with emergencies is one of many steps in this process.

201 S. Hawley Court

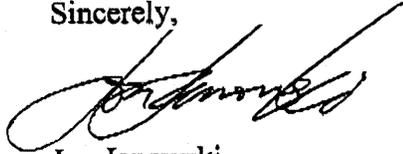
Milwaukee, WI 53214-1966

tel: 414 777-0483

fax: 414 777-0480

Thank you very much for scheduling a hearing on this important issue. Please contact us if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Jon Janowski
Director of Advocacy

Cc: State Senator Gwendolynne Moore
State Senator Robert Wirch
State Senator Carol Roessler
State Senator Peggy Rosenzweig
State Senator Dave Hansen
State Senator Robert Welch

Austin, David

From: Flury, Kelley
Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2001 3:06 PM
To: Austin, David
Subject: FW: 2001 Senate bill 94

-----Original Message-----

From: Bob Horning [mailto:bhorning@execpc.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2001 4:22 PM
To: Sen.Robson@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: 2001 Senate bill 94

May 9, 2001

Senator Judith Robson
Chair Human Services and Aging

I am writing in support of 2001 Senate Bill 94. I am not able to attend the committee hearing and testify in support of this bill due to surgery on my wife. Please accept this as my testimony.

I am coordinator of the Holy Assumption Food Pantry in West Allis, WI. Our pantry has operated since 1980. Last year we served 1788 families, an increase of 42% over 1999. Through April 2001, we have served 676 families, an increase of 13% over 2000. With the help of many churches and schools in our area, Hunger Task Force and Second Harvest Food Banks we are able to supply the needs of our pantry clients.

As Vice Chair of the Hunger Action Team (HAT) in Milwaukee County, I am aware of similar increases in pantry clients at many pantries in the Milwaukee area. HAT is made up of pantry coordinators in Milwaukee County. HAT supports SB 94.

I urge your committee to strongly support SB 94. Pantries in Milwaukee county need financial support to expand dry storage space, freezer and refrigerator storage space.

Thank you for holding the hearing.

Robert E Horning
1617 S 79th Street
West Allis, WI. 53214
bhorning@execpc.com

05/11/2001



Testimony on SB 94

**Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
Senator Judy Robson, Chair**

May 10, 2001

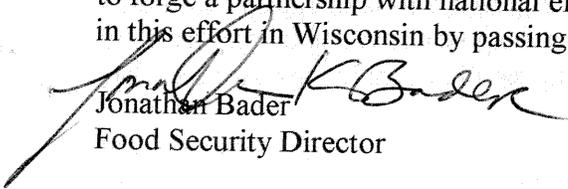
The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) represents 13 Community Action Agencies statewide that directly operate or provide support to 144 food pantries and 55 soup kitchens. These organizations play a vital role in preventing hunger for thousands of Wisconsin citizens in 70 counties each month. In the current fiscal year the CAA network will distribute nearly 11 million pounds of federal commodities, in addition to even greater amounts of food donated by the private sector.

Unfortunately, since implementation of welfare reform the emergency food network has seen increased demand. WISCAP supports SB 94 because it allocates \$1.5 million annually to help food pantries meet this demand. Funds would be used to purchase, transport, store and process food, as well as purchase equipment. SB 94 also targets resources to rural areas where there are fewer volunteers, donors and resources to serve needy families.

However, we also must recognize that pantries are intended to help households in crisis for short periods. We must not expect them to provide long-term supplemental food, as is increasingly common. This increased demand is due in part to fewer people using federal food and cash assistance programs in the wake of welfare reform. For instance, Wisconsin's food stamp enrollment in December 2000 was 38% lower than January 1995 even though the number of people living in poverty had increased. As a result low-income citizens in Wisconsin received \$76 million less in food stamps in 2000 than in 1995. And only half of eligible pantry households receive WIC. Increased state funding for pantries simply cannot replace this level of lost federal resources.

In order to substantially reduce demand on food pantries and ensure true food security we must help more low-income families obtain sufficient food through normal retail channels, which alone guarantees them choice, access, quality, control and dignity. We can ensure this access by supporting outreach and expansion of food stamps and WIC, increasing the number of schools offering School Breakfast, expanding WIC farmers market to all counties, expanding the number of days that elderly nutrition programs serve meals, establishing more community gardens, and increasing access to the senior farmers market nutrition program, as well as other programs that subsidize access to non-emergency food.

The USDA has called on state and local governments, community organizations, and businesses to forge a partnership with national efforts to cut hunger in half by 2015. We ask you to join us in this effort in Wisconsin by passing SB 94 as one component of a broad anti-hunger strategy.


Jonathan Bader
Food Security Director



Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin

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Rev. Sue Moline Larson, Director

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING COMMITTEE
SENATOR JUDY ROBSON, CHAIRPERSON
HEARING ON S.B. 94, FUNDING FOR FOOD PANTRIES
State Capitol, Room 300 Southeast
May 10, 2001 10:00 a.m.

Dear Senator Robson and committee members,

Thank you for accepting testimony on S.B. 94, legislation to provide \$3 M in the next biennium for food pantries in Wisconsin. I am Rev. Sue Moline Larson, the legislative advocate for the six synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with congregations in Wisconsin. I testify in favor of S.B. 94.

Results from a recent survey conducted by the Hunger Prevention Council of Dane County show that between October 1998 and October 1999, food pantry usage in Dane county increased by ten percent. The incidence of hunger and food insecurity is persistent, and many people have come to rely on food pantries as a steady source of food and a supplement to low-wage jobs. Almost half of food pantry recipients who answered the Hunger Prevention Council's survey stated that their work does not pay enough to feed their families, while thirty-eight percent reported living on a limited income due to a disability. Thirty-seven percent were single mothers living with their children. More than ninety percent of respondents were living at or below the federal poverty level (\$17,000 for a family of four). Only twenty-three percent were enrolled in the Food Stamp program, and less than half who would qualify received Women, Infant and Children Nutrition Program vouchers. Those enrolled in the WIC and Food Stamp programs used food pantries because the amount received through those programs was not enough to cover basic food expenses.

Economic conditions have been lauded as bringing increased prosperity to people in the state and nation, but many people earn low wages, and have high housing costs. A two-bedroom apartment in Madison costs a full-time worker \$13/hour, and the average wage required in the rest of the state is \$10/hour. Neither the state nor the federal government has yet increased the minimum wage to keep up with the cost of living, and a full-time minimum wage worker does not earn enough to keep a family with children above the federal poverty level.

Over 400,000 people living in Wisconsin depend on emergency food assistance. When food pantries lack funds, they must cut back by closing early or limiting the number of times that clients may seek assistance. This bill would help to secure funds needed for a variety of services that pantries provide, such as transportation to and from food banks, appliances to store perishable foods, and necessary training for volunteers and staff.

In 2002, Congress will reauthorize the federal Food Stamp Program. State DHFS staff and advocates, including the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin, have been working together to draft recommendations to greatly improve access and

enrollment. Until changes are made, however, increasing numbers of people will continue to seek food aid from pantries throughout the state.

Since this bill did not make it through the legislative process in the last biennium, it is even more important that it do so this year as the economy slows and people find themselves even more hard pressed to make ends meet.

I urge the members of the committee to vote in favor of S.B. 94. Until people have reliable income, access to health care, aid for the elderly for prescription drugs, and school breakfast and summer food programs for children in every school district, the bill will not be an option but a necessity. It is the morally right thing to do to provide food for the hungry. Our communities and churches are doing their part. The state must participate also by supporting both pantry workers and clients so that painful empty stomachs and bare cupboard shelves are filled.

Thank you.

~~SECRET~~

Wilmar Neighborhood Center
953 Jenifer St.
Madison, WI 53703

Last year our food pantry served over 3,000 individuals. We are a member pantry of the Dane County Food Pantry Network. We have ample refrigerator and freezer space. Unfortunately we do not always have the resources to fill them with high demand/need items among the population our food pantry serves. These are items such as meat and dairy products, diapers and hygiene supplies, quality produce and the list goes on.

More funding would enable our food pantry to provide disadvantaged, disabled and hungry people with the kind of food that most of us take for granted. This kind of food is absolutely necessary to establish and maintain healthy diets for food pantry users. As some of you may well know, last year, respondents to the Dane County Hunger Prevention survey stated that over 90% of households had some employment and/or government aid but still registered at or below the Federal Poverty Level.

I do not wish to quantify projections of needy demographics in this testimony but I would like to stress that in the two years that I have been involved in a food pantry on the near east side of Madison, I have observed that an increasing number of working individuals are calling on the food pantry to help them make ends meet. This indicates to me that above and beyond the discussion of disabled persons or elderly persons that can't really work and rely on Social Security Income having a hard time meeting all of their basic needs, persons who are able to work and are contributing, productive members of the economy often aren't being compensated adequately and more and more are participating in assistance programs, such as the food pantry and the like.

Food Pantries are one of the first places that people who are having financial and all kinds of other difficulties turn. Therefore, empowering the food pantries to expand their services and provide adequate emergency supplies of food to all of those who need it would be a sensible thing to do. As things are presently, most food pantries have to shuffle like mad with very limited budgets to provide the quality and volume of food low-income households need to establish and maintain healthy diets. I fully support Senate Bill 94 and think Senators George and anyone else who introduced and designed this proposition are very in tune with the state of food insecurity these days and are making valiant efforts to remedy the horrible reality of the politics of food. I would be more than happy to answer questions, give a tour or arrange a meeting between a food pantry user and a representative.

Thank you and good luck!

Sincerely,

Joshua Frye



(608) 257-4576

Vote Record

Senate - Committee on Human Services and Aging

Date: 9/12/01
Bill Number: SB 94
Moved by: Moore Seconded by: Robson
Motion: passage recommended

Committee Member

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
Sen. Judith Robson, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Gwendolynne Moore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Robert Wirch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. David Hansen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Carol Roessler	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Robert Welch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Ted Kanavas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals:	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>

Motion Carried

Motion Failed