

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1382

To require the President to call a White House Conference on Food and Nutrition.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 6, 2011

Mr. MCGOVERN (for himself and Mrs. EMERSON) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To require the President to call a White House Conference
on Food and Nutrition.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “White House Con-
5 ference on Food and Nutrition Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Hunger and undernutrition are political
9 conditions that can be solved.

1 (2) Access to healthy food and good nutrition
2 should be a fundamental right of all Americans.

3 (3) More than 40 years have passed since the
4 United States convened a White House conference to
5 comprehensively address the issues of food, hunger,
6 health, and nutrition in America.

7 (4) More than 50,000,000 Americans live in
8 households that face a struggle against hunger;
9 17,200,000 of whom are children.

10 (5) The Government spends more than
11 \$100,000,000 every year responding to the concur-
12 rent epidemics of hunger and undernutrition, yet the
13 number of Americans facing hunger continues to
14 grow and our Nation's nutritional health is declin-
15 ing.

16 (6) Appropriate food and nutrition can save the
17 United States billions of dollars in health care costs
18 by preventing or delaying the progression to late-
19 stage disease for tens of millions of Americans who
20 live with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, HIV,
21 AIDS, and heart disease. The costs of the effects
22 and treatments of those diseases are significantly ex-
23 acerbated by hunger, food insecurity, and under-
24 nutrition.

1 (7) A national discussion of the root causes of
2 hunger, food insecurity, and undernutrition, as well
3 as identification of solutions to these epidemics, can
4 lead to action to implement such solutions and to
5 end hunger in America.

6 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE.**

7 (a) **AUTHORITY TO CALL CONFERENCE.**—Not later
8 than December 31, 2012, the President shall call the
9 White House Conference on Food and Nutrition (in this
10 Act referred to as the “Conference”) to be convened not
11 later than 18 months after the selection of the Policy Com-
12 mittee established in section 4, in order to make funda-
13 mental policy recommendations on ways to end hunger
14 and to improve nutrition in the United States and to im-
15 plement the purposes set forth in subsection (c).

16 (b) **PLANNING AND DIRECTION.**—The Secretary of
17 Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Agriculture,
18 and the Secretary of the Treasury (in this Act referred
19 to as the “Cochairs”) shall plan, conduct, and convene the
20 Conference, in consultation with the Surgeon General.

21 (c) **PURPOSES OF THE CONFERENCE.**—The purposes
22 of the Conference are to—

23 (1) identify viable solutions for ending hunger
24 in the United States;

1 (2) review the current structure, scope, and ef-
2 fectiveness of existing legislation and programs at
3 the Federal, State, and local levels that provide for
4 the nutritional needs of food-insecure people living in
5 the United States;

6 (3) determine the extent to which current Fed-
7 eral, State, and local programs that provide for the
8 nutritional health of Americans can better use avail-
9 able resources and ensure greater coordination
10 among such programs;

11 (4) identify new ways to utilize the abundant
12 agricultural resources of the United States to meet
13 the nutritional needs of all Americans;

14 (5) highlight emerging and innovative programs
15 from the public and private sectors, including com-
16 munity-based and faith-based organizations that ef-
17 fectively address the nutrition needs of vulnerable
18 Americans and recommend such programs as can be
19 reasonably and cost-effectively replicated;

20 (6) identify opportunities for effective partner-
21 ships between the Government, industry, labor,
22 healthcare, and the nonprofit sectors to fight hunger
23 in the United States;

24 (7) explore the possibility of creating a Federal
25 office within the Department of Agriculture to over-

1 see the Nation's response to persistent and wide-
2 spread hunger and food insecurity, to include the
3 oversight and coordination of all Federal, State, and
4 local antihunger programs;

5 (8) bring public attention to the more than
6 50,000,000 people living in the United States that
7 face a constant struggle against hunger, food insecur-
8 ity, and inadequate nutrition;

9 (9) illustrate the medical, developmental, and
10 educational impact of hunger, food insecurity, and
11 inadequate nutrition, and the potential savings to
12 the United States health care system, educational
13 system, and other sectors when appropriate food is
14 available to the critically and chronically ill;

15 (10) build understanding of the true cost of
16 hunger in the United States, to include lost wages,
17 diminished stamina, reduced capacity to learn, and
18 the impact of despair; and

19 (11) build understanding that the ever-bur-
20 geoning dual epidemic of hunger and undernutrition
21 is a matter of national security.

22 **SEC. 4. POLICY COMMITTEE; RELATED COMMITTEES.**

23 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than June 30,
24 2011, there is established a Policy Committee comprising
25 of 17 members to be selected as follows:

1 (1) PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES.—Nine mem-
2 bers shall be selected by the President and shall in-
3 clude—

4 (A) 3 members who are officers or employ-
5 ees of the United States, including the Surgeon
6 General; and

7 (B) 6 members with experience in address-
8 ing the needs of food-insecure and undernour-
9 ished people in the United States.

10 (2) HOUSE APPOINTEES.—

11 (A) Two members shall be selected by the
12 Speaker of the House of Representatives after
13 consultation with the chairperson of the Com-
14 mittee on Education and the Workforce, the
15 chairperson of the Committee on Ways and
16 Means, and the chairperson of the Committee
17 on Agriculture, of the House of Representa-
18 tives.

19 (B) Two members shall be selected by the
20 minority leader of the House of Representa-
21 tives, after consultation with the ranking minor-
22 ity members of such committees.

23 (3) SENATE APPOINTEES.—

24 (A) Two members shall be selected by the
25 majority leader of the Senate, after consultation

1 with members of the Committee on Health,
2 Education, Labor, and Pensions, the Committee
3 on Agriculture, and the Committee on Finance,
4 of the Senate.

5 (B) Two members shall be selected by the
6 minority leader of the Senate, after consultation
7 with members of such committees.

8 (b) VOTING; CHAIRPERSON.—

9 (1) The Policy Committee shall act by the vote
10 of a majority of the members present. A quorum of
11 Committee members shall not be required to conduct
12 Committee business.

13 (2) The Surgeon General shall serve as the
14 chairperson of the Policy Committee. The chair-
15 person may vote only to break a tie vote of the other
16 members of the Policy Committee.

17 (c) DUTIES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE.—The Pol-
18 icy Committee shall initially meet at the call of the Co-
19 chairs, not later than 30 days after the last member is
20 selected under subsection (a). Subsequent meetings of the
21 Policy Committee shall be held at the call of the chair-
22 person. Through meetings, hearings, and working ses-
23 sions, the Policy Committee shall—

24 (1) make recommendations to the Cochairs to
25 facilitate the timely convening of the Conference;

1 (2) submit to the Cochairs a proposed agenda
2 for the Conference not later than 90 days after the
3 first meeting of the Policy Committee;

4 (3) make recommendations for the delegates of
5 the Conference;

6 (4) establish the number of delegates to be se-
7 lected under section 5; and

8 (5) establish an executive committee consisting
9 of 3 members of the Policy Committee to work with
10 delegates of the Conference.

11 **SEC. 5. CONFERENCE DELEGATES.**

12 To carry out the purposes of the Conference, the Co-
13 chairs shall bring together delegates representative of the
14 spectrum of thought in the field of food and nutrition,
15 without regard to political affiliation or past partisan ac-
16 tivity, who shall include—

17 (1) representatives of Federal, State, and local
18 governments;

19 (2) professional people and laypeople who are
20 working in the field of food, health, nutrition, and
21 economic security; and

22 (3) representatives of the general public who
23 are affected by hunger in the United States.

1 **SEC. 6. CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION.**

2 (a) ADMINISTRATION.—In administering this section,
3 the Cochairs shall—

4 (1) provide written notice to all members of the
5 Policy Committee of each meeting, hearing, or work-
6 ing session of such Committee not later than 48
7 hours before the occurrence of such meeting, hear-
8 ing, or working session;

9 (2) request the cooperation and assistance of
10 the heads of such other Federal departments and
11 agencies as may be appropriate, including the detail-
12 ing of personnel;

13 (3) make available for public comment a pro-
14 posed agenda prepared by the Policy Committee,
15 which will reflect to the greatest extent possible the
16 major issues facing the field of food and nutrition
17 consistent with the purposes of the Conference set
18 forth in section 3(c);

19 (4) prepare and make available background ma-
20 terials that the Cochairs deem necessary for the use
21 of delegates to the Conference; and

22 (5) employ such additional personnel as may be
23 necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act
24 without regard to provisions of title 5, United States
25 Code, governing appointments in the competitive
26 service, and without regard to chapter 51 and sub-

1 chapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to
2 classification and General Schedule pay rates.

3 (b) DUTIES.—In carrying out the Cochair’s respon-
4 sibilities and functions under this section, the Cochairs
5 shall ensure that—

6 (1) the proposed agenda prepared under sub-
7 section (a)(3) is published in the Federal Register
8 not later than 30 days after such agenda is approved
9 by the Policy Committee;

10 (2) the personnel employed under subsection
11 (a)(5) are fairly balanced in terms of points of views
12 represented and are appointed without regard to po-
13 litical affiliation or previous partisan activities;

14 (3) the recommendations of the Conference are
15 not inappropriately influenced by any public official
16 or by any special interest, but instead are the result
17 of the independent and collective judgment of the
18 delegates of the Conference; and

19 (4) before the Conference is convened—

20 (A) current and adequate statistical data
21 (including decennial census data) and other in-
22 formation on food and nutrition in the United
23 States; and

1 (B) such information as may be necessary
2 to evaluate Federal programs and policies relat-
3 ing to food and nutrition;
4 which the Cochairs may obtain by making grants to
5 or entering into an agreement with, public agencies
6 or nonprofit organizations, are readily available in
7 advance of the Conference to the delegates.

8 (c) GIFTS.—The Cochairs may accept, on behalf of
9 the United States, gifts (in cash or in kind, including vol-
10 untary and uncompensated services), which shall be avail-
11 able to carry out this Act. Gifts of cash shall be available
12 in addition to amounts appropriated to carry out this title.
13 Gifts may be earmarked by the donor or the executive
14 committee for a specific purpose.

15 (d) RECORDS.—The Cochairs shall maintain records
16 regarding—

17 (1) the sources, amounts, and uses of gifts ac-
18 cepted under subsection (c); and

19 (2) the identity of each person receiving assist-
20 ance to carry out this Act, and the amount of such
21 assistance received by each such person.

22 **SEC. 7. REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE.**

23 (a) PRELIMINARY REPORT.—Not later than 100 days
24 after the Conference adjourns, the Policy Committee shall
25 prepare a preliminary report on the Conference which

1 shall be published in the Federal Register and submitted
2 to the chief executive officers of the States. The Policy
3 Committee shall request that the chief executive officers
4 of the States submit to the Policy Committee, not later
5 than 45 days after receiving such report, their views and
6 findings on such report.

7 (b) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after
8 the date on which the Conference adjourns, the Policy
9 Committee shall—

10 (1) prepare a final report of the Conference
11 which shall include a compilation of the views and
12 findings of the chief executive officers of the States
13 received under subsection (a); and

14 (2) publish in the Federal Register, and trans-
15 mit to the President and to Congress, the rec-
16 ommendations for the administrative action and the
17 legislation necessary to implement the recommenda-
18 tions contained in such report.

19 **SEC. 8. STATUS REPORTS.**

20 (a) INITIAL STATUS REPORT.—Not later than 2
21 years after the date on which the Conference adjourns,
22 the Surgeon General shall—

23 (1) prepare a status report documenting the im-
24 plementation of the recommendations contained in
25 the final report described in section 7(b)(1); and

1 (2) publish in the Federal Register, and trans-
2 mit to the President and to Congress, such status
3 report.

4 (b) **SUBSEQUENT STATUS REPORTS.**—Not later than
5 5 years after the date on which the Conference adjourns,
6 and every 5 years thereafter until all recommendations in
7 the final report described in section 7(b)(1) are achieved,
8 the Comptroller General shall—

9 (1) prepare a status report documenting the im-
10 plementation of the recommendations contained in
11 such final report; and

12 (2) publish in the Federal Register, and trans-
13 mit to the President and to Congress, such status
14 report.

15 **SEC. 9. DEFINITION OF STATE.**

16 For the purposes of this Act, the term “State” means
17 any of the several States, the District of Columbia, the
18 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa,
19 the Virgin Islands of the United States, or the Common-
20 wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

21 **SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

22 (a) **AUTHORIZATION.**—

23 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—There are authorized to be
24 appropriated to carry out this Act—

1 (A) such sums as may be necessary for the
2 first fiscal year in which the Policy Committee
3 plans the Conference and for the following fis-
4 cal year; and

5 (B) such sums as may be necessary for the
6 fiscal year in which the Conference is held.

7 (2) LIMITATION.—Any new spending authority
8 or new authority to enter into contracts under this
9 Act, and under which the United States is obligated
10 to make outlays, shall be effective only to the extent,
11 and in such amounts, as are provided in advance in
12 appropriations Acts.

13 (b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
15 graph (3), funds appropriated to carry out this Act
16 and funds received as gifts under section 6(c) shall
17 remain available for obligation or expenditure until
18 the expiration of the 1-year period beginning on the
19 date the Conference adjourns.

20 (2) UNOBLIGATED FUNDS.—Except as provided
21 in paragraph (3), any such funds neither expended
22 nor obligated before the expiration of the 1-year pe-
23 riod beginning on the date the Conference adjourns
24 shall be returned to the United States Treasury.

1 (3) CONFERENCE NOT CONVENED.—If the Con-
2 ference is not convened before December 31, 2012,
3 a trust fund shall be established and such funds
4 shall only be available for a future Conference on
5 Food and Nutrition.

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