



## News Release

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### **Feeding America Poll Shows Majority of Likely Voters Want Government to Do More to Address Food Insecurity**

**Nov. 7, 2023** – A new poll released by Feeding America showed nearly 70% of likely voters in the United States want the government to do more to address food insecurity. The survey data follows the recent release of a U.S. Department of Agriculture Report that showed the number of people living in food-insecure households grew in 2022 to more than 44 million people, including 13 million children —an increase of nearly 31% and 44% respectively from the previous year.

The national polling data includes results from more than 1,200 likely voters and showed that families in the U.S. continue to feel the strain of higher grocery bills, with the issue being top-of-mind for them:

- 82% of likely voters say they are concerned about high food prices right now.
- 87% are concerned that hunger is on the rise in America.

The results of the poll provide an understanding of what likely voters in the United States consider to be priorities for a 2023 Farm Bill. Congress only reauthorizes the farm bill about once every five years, and this legislation impacts nearly every federal nutrition program that helps ease the strain and stress of hunger in communities across the country. This includes The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) — which, through the help of food banks, ensures that food from U.S. farms and producers makes its way to the homes of families facing hunger — and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps families afford groceries.

“Food banks need programs like TEFAP to help ensure families can put healthy and nutritious food on the table,” said Vince Hall, Chief Government Relations Officer for Feeding America. “Food banks use these federal nutrition programs in combination with other public and private partnerships in the community to create a critical food support system for our neighbors facing hunger.”

In 2022, Southeast Missouri Food Bank received 1 million fewer pounds of TEFAP food than it received in 2021; the food bank was serving about 10,000 more people each month in 2022.

According to Feeding America’s poll, likely voters support an increase in funding for programs like TEFAP and SNAP to help more people in America and food banks:

- 93% say TEFAP is an important program.
- 85% support increasing TEFAP funding in the farm bill.
- 87% feel positively about the food assistance that comes from food banks.
- 80% agree it is possible to invest more in SNAP while also addressing other national priorities, like reducing the national debt.
- 79% agree Congress should make it easier to qualify for SNAP for people who are experiencing hard times.
- 73% agree we shouldn't take away the autonomy of people using SNAP by putting more limits on what they can buy at the grocery store.
- Majorities of Democrats (90%), Independents (66%) and Republicans (61%) also agree that we should continue to increase SNAP benefit amounts to reflect current nutrition guidance and changing food costs.

The current farm bill expired Sept. 30.

"If lawmakers do not consider the farm bill soon, many federal agriculture and nutrition programs are at risk of being underfunded," said Hall. "This would put additional strain on farmers, food banks and our neighbors facing hunger."

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### **About Southeast Missouri Food Bank**

The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build healthy communities. The food bank provides food to 140 charitable and disaster relief programs in Southeast Missouri. These member agencies include food pantries, soup kitchens, domestic violence and homeless shelters. Southeast Missouri Food Bank also holds regular mobile food distributions and provides monthly boxes of food to 5,500 senior citizens and weekend backpacks of food during the school year to nearly 1,200 students in 30 school districts. The food bank's 16-county coverage area includes Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard and Wayne counties. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or scheduling a time to volunteer. Visit [semofoodbank.org](http://semofoodbank.org) for more information.

### **About Feeding America**

Feeding America® is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of more than 200 food banks, 21 statewide food bank associations, and over 60,000 partner agencies, food pantries and meal programs, we helped provide 5.2 billion meals to tens of millions of people in need last year. Feeding America also supports programs that prevent food waste and improve food security among the people we serve; brings attention to the social and systemic barriers that contribute to food insecurity in our nation; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Visit [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org), find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.