



United Methodist Urban Ministry of Wichita, Inc.

P. O. Box 2756 • Wichita, Kansas 67201-2756 • www.umum.org

December 27, 2005

Mr. Mike Johanns, Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-3355

Dear Secretary Johanns:

United Methodist Urban Ministry (UMUM) is a basic needs-social service agency in Wichita, Kansas. We provide food, clothing and shelter to more than 6,500 families each month for 10 counties in Kansas. We have come to understand the depth of struggle required for families to make ends meet when they find themselves in poverty. The last several years have been the most difficult as our community, heavily reliant on the aircraft industry, has been trying to recover from the economic downturn following 9/11.

Faith based groups have been asked to do more of the work as the government has cut even more of the programs that aid families in poverty. We can only do so much! It is important that the government programs remain healthy in the partnership with faith-based organizations like United Methodist Urban Ministry. To this end, UMUM strongly urges the following for the 2007 farm bill:

1. Support the entitlement structure of the Food Stamp Program, which responds to increases in need whether due to economic changes or disasters;
2. Make benefit allotments adequate by increasing both the minimum benefit and other allotment levels;
3. Expand eligibility to more needy people left out of the program now, including all otherwise eligible legal immigrants, ex-drug felons making new starts, and others struggling to make ends meet;
4. Liberalize resource rules, streamline enrollment operations, and increase match rates for state administrative operations;
5. Support food stamp outreach;
6. Continue to allow recipients choice among food purchases and support healthy choices through nutrition education; and
7. Continue Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) delivery.

We appreciate your assistance in keeping those who are in poverty at the top of the minds of those who are dealing with budget concerns.

Sincerely,

Deann Smith
Executive Director



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