

ACTION SHEET

Invest in Ending Poverty in the U.S. and Globally

Millions of hardworking people in the U.S. and around the globe struggle to make ends meet and provide the best opportunities for their families. But programs like SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and Medicaid help lift millions of hardworking Americans out of poverty and give them the medical support they need. And U.S. investments in health and education in poorer nations save millions of lives from disease, ensure quality education for the poorest children, strengthen democratic values, and build trading partners with emerging economies. It is important that Congress and the Administration continue and strengthen these efforts to fill financial gaps and foster self-reliance. Doing so will make us a stronger nation here at home, and strengthen important partnerships around the world.

But the White House is proposing to slash foreign aid funding and our fight against global poverty by 30 percent! And Congress recently tried to pass a healthcare bill that would have weakened Medicaid for Americans, and has signaled their desire to cut and weaken SNAP. It's said that the federal budget is a moral document, and cutting these kinds of programs is just wrong. Gutting global anti-poverty programs would mean more young girls never see the inside of a classroom, more children go without vaccines that could save their lives, more people die of treatable disease like tuberculosis. Weakening Medicaid would mean fewer poor people, many of them children, have access to vital healthcare services in the U.S.

Programs Supporting American Families

1. SNAP is Critical to Ending Hunger in America

Millions of Americans are struggling to put food on the table, and SNAP is critical to meeting those needs. In 2015, almost one in five children in the U.S. lived in households struggling with hunger (13 million, according to the USDA). Studies show that children who are regularly hungry suffer from weakened immune systems, slowed and abnormal growth, and anemia. Children in families that do not struggle against hunger tend to be healthier, while young children from food-insecure households are two-thirds more likely to be at risk of developmental problems. SNAP is our first line of defense against hunger, helping many working families make ends meet and get on their feet. The Census Bureau estimates that SNAP lifted 4.6 million people above the poverty line in 2015. More than 60 percent of households with children work while participating in SNAP.

2. Medicaid Provides Access to Health Care for the Poorest in America

The U.S. healthcare crisis would be even worse if it weren't for the Medicaid program. Medicaid pays for medical assistance for individuals and families with low incomes and resources and covers 58 million low-income people, including 29.5 million children. Medicaid responds automatically in a weak economy, helping vulnerable Americans weather tough economic times. Additionally, Medicaid spending on hospitals, clinics and other health care providers ripples through local economies, paying the salaries of nurses, doctors, and other vital health care workers, who in turn spend money at local businesses. There are proposals in the recent "repeal and replace" alternatives that would weaken Medicaid.

Programs Supporting Families in Poorer Nations

1. Global Health Investments Save Lives and Build Stable Nations

With U.S. leadership, we have cut in half the number of children under age five that die from preventable causes each year, from 12.6 million in 1990 to 5.9 million in 2016. There is a global goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths by 2035. To achieve this, the U.S. must continue to partner with poor countries, helping them fill gaps in pre-natal care, basic vaccinations, and nutrition. We must also help parents living with HIV, or who are at risk of TB and malaria to stay healthy to care for their families.

2. Education Transforms Nations

In 1999, over 100 million primary school-aged children around the world were denied access to education. But action by developing countries to abolish school fees, build infrastructure, and train teachers, paired with support from donors like the U.S. and the Global Partnership for Education, has reduce the number of out-of-school children to 61 million today. Despite these efforts, a staggering 250 million kids – nearly 40 percent of the world’s children of primary school age – still can’t read. In addition, more than 200 million adolescents and youth are currently not in secondary school. The U.S. must continue to help partner nations fill their need gap to drive these numbers down.

Use EPIC to Write to Congress: Urge Them to Act on Poverty

Engage: Though most people are unaware, due to effective government policies, poverty has come down in the U.S. in recent years, and has gone down steadily around the globe over the past 15 years.

Problem: But millions of people in the U.S. are still at risk of hunger, poverty, and health emergencies, and in poor nations around the globe many populations still lack the most basic healthcare, nutrition, and education.

Inform: Programs like SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and Medicaid in the U.S. help millions of hardworking families meet their basic needs. And around the globe, programs like the Global Partnership for Education, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, and USAID’s (US Agency for International Development) investments in maternal and child health, and education are supporting millions of children to survive and thrive.

Call to Action: These programs represent smart policy and a good use of tax payer dollars. We ask that the Representative/Senator please take the following actions to protect and strengthen these efforts:

1. Communicate to House/Senate leadership your support for safeguarding SNAP and Medicaid, including protecting these programs against structural changes that would undermine their effectiveness.
2. Speak and write to House/Senate leadership and the Chair and Ranking member of the State and Foreign Operations Sub-Committee of Appropriations asking that they protect poverty-focused development assistance for maternal and child health, nutrition, child vaccinations, diseases of poverty, and education.

I can provide you with additional background on each of these requests.

Leading with Action: Advocacy Workshop Agenda

Below is a sample agenda and script that you can use to put people in your community into action. We know that when people take action they get inspired. The agenda below would require a meeting of roughly 60 minutes. Adapt the elements to fit your style and timeframe.

I. Setting the Stage – 15 Minutes

2 min: Welcome and acknowledge people for being there.

“Thanks to all of you for coming. There are a lot of ways you could be spending the day, and I want to thank all of you for coming out and learning more about how YOU can play a role in the movement to end poverty. Can the RESULTS volunteers briefly say their name and how many years you’ve been involved? Also, can you all be sure to sign our sign in sheet?”

3 min: State the purpose of the meeting.

“Our purpose today is to inspire you all about the difference you can make, working with others, to create the political will to end hunger and poverty. In the next few minutes, we’ll . . .

- Learn a bit about RESULTS, the group organizing this.
- We will learn about an issue of poverty.
- We will take an action that will make a difference on that issue. We'll write a letter about appropriations.
- Finally, we'll see who is interested in continuing to make a difference with RESULTS.”

10 min: Center the room and do introductions.

“Let’s see who’s in the room tonight and get in touch with why we are here. Please give us your name and tell us briefly why acting on issue of poverty is important to you.” Other possible question, “What are you committed to in life?” or “Who do you want to be in the world?”

Afterward, “Thank you all for sharing what is important to you. We have a lot in common.”

II. The Basics of RESULTS – 10 Minutes

RESULTS is...

“So what is RESULTS? RESULTS is movement of passionate, committed, everyday people. Together we use our voices to influence political decisions that will bring an end to poverty. As volunteers, we receive training, support, and inspiration to become skilled advocates. In time, we learn to effectively advise policy makers, guiding them toward decisions that will improve access to health, education, and economic opportunity. Together we realize the incredible power we possess to use our voices to change the world. “

Show the video if you have time: We Have a Vision: http://www.results.org/blog/we_have_a_vision/

1. An example of our success is the Reach Act of 2015. The bill puts the U.S. on track to lead the effort in ending needless child and maternal deaths in poor countries. In 2016 we helped gather 218 cosponsors in the House (over half), and 35 in the Senate (more than one-third), and media in all 50 states. This has set us up to reintroduce and pass the bill this year. Questions?

2. A local example of our role in creating change is: We moved Rep. _____ to cosponsor the bill as part of this—he met with us in _____ (month) of 2016, which was key in getting his/her support.

A few more details if you have time:

- RESULTS partners meet twice per month to plan and take action.
- During one of those meetings, we hook into a national conference call with hundreds of other volunteers around the country to learn more about an issue, learn to speak powerfully, and take action to communicate with our elected officials by sending them letters.
- We also develop plans for influencing our decision makers through face-to-face meetings, the media, and community action.

III. Issues & Action Component – 30 Minutes

1. Introduce the issue of appropriations with a story or video from below:
 - *Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria*: http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/blog/2016-12-01_SALESFORCE_RED_Great_Strides_Toward_an_AIDS-Free_Generation/
 - *Maternal and Child Health & Early Childhood Development*: <http://tokeepapromise.org>
 - *First 1000 Days*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvS6ijzqfgM&feature=youtu.be>
 - *TB*: http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/blog/2016-10-25_Meet_the_Generation_Mykola_Story/
 - *Global Fund Generation*: http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/blog/2016-08-16_Meet_the_generation_to_End_It_For_Good/
 - *Basic Education and Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in Chad*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r--C6L-8LcE&feature=youtu.be>
 - *GPE accomplishments of 2016*: <http://www.globalpartnership.org/multimedia/video/2016-gpe-year-review>
2. Read the February Action Sheet together, including sample letter.
3. If people don't know their members of Congress, show them how to find their legislators and relevant contact information online.
4. Everyone writes letters. Encourage them to personalize. Remember to tell people to add date, name, address, email, phone.
5. Have one or two people volunteer to read their letter out loud for feedback and encouragement.
6. Let people know how/when you'll deliver their letters and that you'll report back.
7. Debrief on the action-taking.

IV. Invitation to Attend the Next Meeting & Closing – 5 Minutes

“Lastly, we are planning to have future meetings like this one about RESULTS and taking people through the process of taking action by writing letters like the ones you wrote tonight.

- Who is up for doing this again?
- Who knows other people or groups who might be interested?
- We are also looking for people who want to take the next step in using their voice to work with the media and Congress with our group. Who is curious about what our chapter does and wants to learn more?
- Who is interested in learning more about supporting RESULTS financially?”

Share thank yous, and be sure to capture contact information including name, phone, email, address. If you send it to Ken Patterson (kpatterson@results.org), we can sign these new people up for twice-monthly action alerts.