

Reps. Murphy, DeLauro Focus on Rising Food and Fuel Costs in Waterbury

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WATERBURY, CT - Today, U.S. Representatives Chris Murphy and Rosa DeLauro, Chairwoman of the Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration Appropriations Subcommittee, met with representatives from various agencies that serve the hungry in Waterbury to see first-hand how rising fuel and food costs are affecting city residents.

Each year more than 280,000 Connecticut residents are at risk of hunger. According to the Connecticut Food Bank, many of their programs are reporting as much as a 20% increase in the number of individuals and families showing up for the first time at their emergency pantry and soup kitchen locations. This includes seeing more working poor at the pantries looking for food.

"The consequences of our economic downturn are crystal clear when I visit Connecticut food banks. People that used to donate what they could to help others in need are now clients. With rising food and fuel costs, middle class families are burdened like never before, and we need to figure out a solution to serve those that need help," said Murphy, who prior to the meeting delivered meals to seniors in a downtown Waterbury senior housing building with Meals on Wheels.

"Hearing first hand the challenges faced by organizations that help the hungry and the stories of residents, reinforces why I fought hard for increased funding for nutrition assistance programs that provide resources for food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens. I will continue this fight so that no families are forced to go hungry," said DeLauro.

Congress recognized this growing demand and through the 2008 farm bill, provided an immediate infusion of \$50 million this year to address the supply shortages. The farm bill also increases funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program - food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens - from the current level of \$140 million to \$250 million per year as well as indexes the amount to inflation.

The farm bill also ends years of erosion to the food stamp benefits - increasing the standard deduction from the current level of \$134 to \$144 and the minimum benefit, which has been frozen for the past 30 years, from \$10 to \$14, as well as indexing both to inflation.

