

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Questions and Answers

BREAD FOR THE WORLD'S 2018

OFFERING OF LETTERS:
FOR SUCH A
TIME AS THIS

1. When is the best time to write Congress about hunger and poverty issues?

Personal letters and emails to Congress are always welcome and effective. Congress develops budget and spending bills throughout the year with final resolution occurring sometime in the fall. Check bread.org/activist for updated sample letters reflecting the latest happenings in Washington, D.C. Or you can opt in to receive Fresh Bread, a weekly email update on legislative hunger and poverty issues, at bread.org/freshbread.

2. What is the budget process and timeline?

The budget process begins when the president's budget proposal is submitted to Congress in February. House and Senate Budget Committees begin work on a budget resolution in March, which sets yearly spending levels and longer-term priorities.

House and Senate Appropriations Committees begin work on annual spending bills in the spring with an expectation of approving 12 spending bills by early fall. If Congress cannot pass necessary spending bills by Sept. 30 (the end of the fiscal year), a continuing resolution needs to be approved to keep the government temporarily funded until a full agreement can be reached.

In some years, the budget process includes reconciliation, which enables the majority party to make big changes without any votes from the minority party. Last year, Congress attempted to use reconciliation to make deep cuts to Medicaid, but was unsuccessful because of advocacy done by you and other Bread for the World members.

3. What is the difference between mandatory and discretionary spending?

There are two types of spending in the federal budget, mandatory and discretionary. Mandatory spending includes programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security. Individuals are able to participate in these programs if they meet specific eligibility criteria. These programs are impacted most by the reconciliation process.

Discretionary spending is allocated through the appropriations process and includes programs such as



WIC and international poverty-focused development assistance, as well as job training, housing, and defense spending.

4. Where can I learn more about the budget process and how it impacts people struggling with hunger?

Bread has a series of fact sheets that explain budget terms and processes, which can be found at bread.org/resource-library.

5. Why is Bread doing another Offering of Letters focused on the budget? Aren't there other issues moving in Congress this year?

Right now, the biggest threat to people struggling with hunger and poverty continues to be the threat of large budget cuts. Your advocacy is critical in ensuring that spending bills provide the strongest support possible for anti-hunger and anti-poverty efforts in the United States and around the world.

Bread for the World also continues to engage in other legislative priorities, including the Dream Act, the reauthorization of the farm bill, and the Global Food Security Act. You can keep up on Bread's legislative priorities by visiting bread.org/activist or signing up for Fresh Bread, our weekly email update on legislative hunger and poverty issues, at bread.org/freshbread.

To access the full toolkit, visit bread.org/ol

