

## **Longtime Indianapolis hunger relief leader begins 16-day fast to show the impact of federal food cutbacks as Congress debates spending plans:**

### ***Indy Hunger Network's Dave Miner will miss one meal for every million meals at risk for Hoosier children, seniors and veterans, urging Congress to avoid SNAP cuts***

(INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., September 21, 2017) Dave Miner, a local and national leader on hunger relief causes for more than three decades, plans to go without food for more than two weeks starting today – a fast to spotlight the plight of a million Hoosiers at risk of hunger and the potential loss of millions of meals if Congress passes dramatic cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

For the next 16 days, Miner will consume only water and limited fluid nutrition. Miner has led the influential national hunger relief organization Bread for the World, the Indianapolis Interfaith Hunger Initiative, and was instrumental in the formation of the Indy Hunger Network alliance of food assistance organizations, corporate partners and advocacy groups serving Central Indiana.

Miner explains that he planned the duration of the fast with a startling symbolism in mind – 50 meals missed from September 21 through October 6 representing 50 million meals potentially lost for Indiana children, senior citizens and veterans among the broader group of SNAP recipients.

“Every meal I’ll miss for the next 16 days represents roughly a million meals in jeopardy for Hoosier children, seniors and veterans if the drastic cuts being debated in Congress now become reality,” Miner said. “I have a plan to fast safely. My decision to undertake what I know will be a difficult task is my own choice, while our most vulnerable neighbors could go hungry through no choice of their own. I feel strongly that people of conscience should speak out, in whatever way they feel moved to do so. This is one way I have chosen.”

Congressional hearings and action are underway on a series of appropriations measures, including federal spending on food and nutrition programs. Cuts to SNAP of \$150 billion over the next ten years have been floated during the budget process, leaving state governments to make up the difference or face the elimination of almost 50 billion meals to needy families nationally.

New research on food insecurity released by the USDA earlier this month singled out Indiana among a handful of states where hunger is significantly higher than the nation. More than one of every six Hoosier households are food insecure or face very low food security, meaning SNAP cuts could hit Hoosiers especially hard.

“This is a national issue with a very intimate impact; we all likely know people who wake up many days without enough money or food to feed their families, or children who routinely go to bed hungry — but we don’t realize we know them.” Miner said. “There’s a hidden aspect of hunger and poverty that’s staggering. The overwhelming number of individuals and families who find themselves in these circumstances is why I’ve felt called to undertake this fast as a personal act of public advocacy. I urge anyone who’s committed to ending hunger to contact our U.S. Senators and their congressional representative today.”

*(more)*

Miner praises the countless donors, volunteers and supporters of non-profit organizations like Gleaners, Second Helpings, and local food pantries that fight hunger every day across Indiana. But he adds that federal funding is an indispensable part of a comprehensive hunger relief effort, explaining that SNAP alone represents roughly 67% of the total national 'food safety net' for hungry Americans.

"We need every person who donates money, food or time to a pantry to keep doing so," he noted. "But there's no charitable solution for the SNAP cuts being considered in Congress. Public investments like SNAP are essential to any realistic blueprint for ending hunger – as constituents and taxpayers, we must tell our elected representatives to protect these programs and the at-risk families that they help."

### **Media Inquiries and Public Awareness:**

Dave Miner is available for media interviews on his fast, details of the SNAP budget issue and other public policy, private and philanthropic hunger relief activities in Indiana.

The public may follow Dave as he shares his experience. He will be blogging at [millionmealfast.com](http://millionmealfast.com). Additional information will be available on the *Bread for the World – Indiana* Facebook page and at [www.breadindiana.org](http://www.breadindiana.org).

During the 16 days from September 21 to October 6, Dave invites the public to join him in one or more of the following ways:

- Pray for our nation, for our legislators, and for those whose health and wellbeing are threatened by these funding cuts;
- Resolve to contact your senator or representative at least once during this period via phone, email, and/or handwritten letter to oppose these cruel cuts to SNAP. You may want to mention Dave's fast (find your Congressional representatives at <http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/index.htm>);
- Finally, share this information with your family, friends, and members of your church congregation, and invite them to engage in being a voice for those in need.

### **Media Contacts:**

Dave Miner, 317-691-7438, [dminer145@aol.com](mailto:dminer145@aol.com)

Chris Watts, CVR Public Relations, 317.514.3184, [cwatts@cvrindy.com](mailto:cwatts@cvrindy.com)

Nathan Wilson, 317-604-9352, [nathandaywilson@gmail.com](mailto:nathandaywilson@gmail.com)