

Get your local daily news, special offers & more delivered right to your inbox!  
**SIGN UP NOW >**

[http://www.tribstar.com/opinion/columns/mark-bennett-local-letters-aim-to-remind-congress-to-protect/article\\_9adadc13-d12e-5802-aeb0-ae629d0e5b92.html](http://www.tribstar.com/opinion/columns/mark-bennett-local-letters-aim-to-remind-congress-to-protect/article_9adadc13-d12e-5802-aeb0-ae629d0e5b92.html)

TOPICAL

## Remembering hunger's vastness

### Mark Bennett: Local letters aim to remind Congress to protect aid for the hungry

By Mark Bennett | Tribune-Star Apr 30, 2017



JCG

Tribune-Star file/Joseph C. GarzaLet's talk...after the movie: Dorothy Drummond introduces the movie, "A Place at the Table," at United Campus Ministries on North 7th Street.

[f](#) [t](#) [G+](#) [in](#) [p](#) [@](#)

Many of Americans go to bed hungry. One of every five kids ends the day without enough to eat.

In the world's poorest countries, thousands, even a million in places like South Sudan, face starvation.

It's a predicament most of us can't comprehend. A remote stretch of South Dakota is the only place in the continental United States that doesn't have a McDonald's restaurant within a 100-mile radius, according to Business Insider. If we haven't consumed food for a couple hours, we can always find a drive-thru or walk into the kitchen and open the fridge. "Hunger" is what we feel on a low-carb diet.

In a place such as Bangladesh, hunger affects millions of residents as one-third of that south Asian country floods each year. On top of that problem, farmers cope with arsenic-tainted soil. Despite those environmental obstacles, hunger has decreased "dramatically" in Bangladesh, according to Bread for the World, a nonpartisan, ecumenical Christian movement formed in 1972 to fight malnutrition and hunger.

Such victories mean lives are saved, but they don't imply that the problem is cured. Instead, approximately 795 million kids, women and men around the planet — one of every nine people — still contend with chronic hunger every day, Bread for the World calculates. For many, it's a matter of life or death.

The Terre Haute chapter of Bread for the World wants to convey its concerns about the impact of hunger to local members of Congress. The Bread members here represent 20 local churches, as well as the Sisters of Providence at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. They'll gather today for an "Offering of Letters," where participants will compose letters to Indiana's U.S. Senators Joe Donnelly and Todd Young, and 8th District House Rep. Larry Bucshon, urging them to protect domestic and foreign food aid programs targeted for significant cuts proposed by new President Donald Trump's administration.

On Monday, representatives from the participating churches will meet again for a "Blessing of the Letters" ceremony at 6 p.m. in the United Campus Ministries chapel at 321 N. Seventh St. Dorothy Drummond, coordinator of Terre Haute's Bread chapter, expects the number of letters to top 750. All will be hand delivered this week to the congressmen's offices in Terre Haute or Indianapolis.

Based on similar efforts in the past few years, the letter writers can expect a reply from the legislators, Drummond said.

The message is particularly crucial this year, given the proposal to cut foreign aid — which represents less than 1 percent of federal spending — by \$10 billion while also reducing other domestic federal food aid programs.

"Cuts in such programs as SNAP [the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps], WIC [the Women, Infants and Children program, which provides nutrition for mothers and babies], school lunches, and school breakfasts could not be easily made up by community-based efforts," Drummond told the Tribune-Star. "Further, cuts proposed would make it impossible to address famine, which threatens in several areas of the world."

A trio of African nations are gripped in what the United Nations calls the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II. The UN estimates 20 million people in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen may starve in the coming months without aid. Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, a Republican, visited the region stricken by famine earlier this month. He told The Voice of America, "I think Americans, if they saw what I see here, and I see in other places, would be glad that our country does what it does," referring to U.S. foreign aid and diplomatic efforts.

Likewise, a fellow Republican senator, majority leader Mitch McConnell, expressed opposition to the proposed reductions in U.S. assistance to needy countries, pointing out to The Associated Press last month that "diplomacy is a lot more effective — and certainly cheaper — than military engagement."

Bread for the World's mission is to end hunger wherever it exists, in America and elsewhere. Reminders that hunger exists — in the form of those letters from folks in Terre Haute — are important for the members of Congress and all of us.

Mark Bennett can be reached at 812-231-4377 or mark.bennett@tribstar.com.

We have recently upgraded our commenting system. If you wish to comment please login using your social ID or create a new account.

0 comments

Sign in

1 person listening

[Empty comment box]

+ Follow Share Post comment as...

Newest | Oldest

### Tribune-Star Events

**MAY 18** **Indiana State University Sycamore...**  
Bob Warn Baseball ... | Terre Haute, IN

**MAY 8** **Open Mic Night**  
The Verve | Terre Haute, IN

**MAY 8** **Friends of the Library: Annual Boo...**  
Vigo County Public... | Terre Haute, IN

**MAY 8** **Vigo County 4-H Color Me Green R...**  
Wabash Valley Fair... | Terre Haute, IN



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
8	9	10	11	12	13

🔍 See all events    + Add your event

### Mark Bennett

Mark Bennett has reported and analyzed news from the Wabash Valley and beyond since Larry Bird wore Sycamore blue. That role with the Tribune-Star has taken him from Rome to Alaska and many points in between, but Terre Haute suits him best.