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**Long Overdue Relief Package Welcome Help for Hurting Families
*Media Statement from Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director
of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks***

“Yesterday was the longest day of winter. Today, we feel hope that the darkest days of the pandemic and its devastating impact on poverty and food insecurity are behind us. The bipartisan relief package passed yesterday by Congress includes important and desperately needed measures to mitigate the immediate hardships that hundreds of thousands of Ohio households are enduring through no fault of their own.

“We know the suffering from this once-in-a-generation crisis will not have subsided six months from now, and that more will need to be done. We know that this relief comes too late for many who have already experienced the debilitating effects of hunger or have lost jobs, careers, life savings, businesses or, tragically, loved ones. But we are also incredibly grateful that meaningful help is on its way.

“This legislation includes a temporary boost to maximum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, something anti-hunger advocates have been urging for nine months to help to prevent widespread child and caregiver food insecurity. It also includes additional funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) commodities, which will help keep critical foods on the shelves of our foodbanks. Additionally, its investments in rental assistance and unemployment compensation will help keep more low- and moderate-income people housed and fed as they continue to weather the difficult recovery ahead.

“This isn’t everything that hungry Ohioans need, but it will provide needed and welcome relief. We want to especially thank Senators Rob Portman and Sherrod Brown for supporting this package and playing key roles in securing its passage, as well as Representatives Balderson, Beatty, Chabot, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan, Stivers, Turner and Wenstrup. Food insecurity – whether the symptom of inadequate wages, personal health or economic crises, racial injustice or a global pandemic – is not, and should never be, a partisan issue. We look forward to building on this bipartisan legislation to secure additional investments in food and economic security for vulnerable Ohioans at the state and federal levels.”

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About the Ohio Association of Foodbanks

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is Ohio’s largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio’s 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,600 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2020, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute more than 270 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

Contact: Joree Novotny, Director of External Affairs for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks
614-273-5818 (cell) – or – jnovotny@ohiofoodbanks.org