#### The Portland Observer

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# Preventable Hunger in Our Land of Plenty

### The battle for nutrition

#### assistance

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

The nearly 49 million Americans-including nearly 16 million children-living in food insecure households will

be struggling to afford the food they need this holiday season. These families won't be choosing between apple or pumpkin pie but will face choices about paying for groceries or rent, heat, electricity, medicine or clothing for their children as they do each month-choices no family should have to make in our nation with the largest Gross Domestic Product in the world.

Congress will be choosing how many of these desperate famifrom life-giving and life-sustaining federal nutrition programs. first year alone. In the middle of this season of gratitude for plenty, Congress has put the Supplemental Nutri-

chopping block while leaving largely intact subsidies for rich farmers and even some nonfarmers.

weeks away Congress is work-

ing to bridge the gap between two dramatically dif- meal on that budget. ferent Farm Bill proposals funding cuts for SNAP.

often called food stamps) on the three years that already began on when three-quarters of our needy children who received With the decision deadline just SNAP benefits now average a mere \$1.40 per person per meal. Imagine preparing your holiday

SNAP lifted 2.2 million chilwhich both include unjust dren out of poverty in 2012 and provided benefits to over 46 mil-

Nov. 1 and affected every single nation's teachers report students SNAP recipient. This recent cut who routinely show up to school was equivalent to a week's worth hungry and half report hunger to of meals for a nine-year-old. be a serious problem in their classrooms, what kind of political leaders could for one minute consider cutting children's food assistance while protecting subsidies for rich farmers?

Hunger and malnutrition have devastating consequences for The Senate bill cuts \$4 bil- lion Americans on average ev- children and have been linked to

What kind of political leaders could for one minute consider cutting children's food assistance while protecting subsidies for rich farmers?

lion from SNAP over 10 years ery month, including more than low birth weight and birth dewhile the House bill slashes more than \$40 billion-denying food to as many as six million people, including children, seniors, and veterans. The House proposal would also drop 210,000 chillies and children in need to cut dren from school meals and cost our economy 55,000 jobs in the Any additional cuts will take des-

> cuts to the already meager SNAP food benefits will come on top of

22 million, or more than one in need during the recent recession and still sluggish recovery. Nearly three-quarters of SNAP houseperately needed food away from Any agreed upon Farm Bill many vulnerable children and adults.

At a time when child poverty tion Assistance Program (SNAP, the \$11 billion cut over the next remains at a record high, and

fects, obesity, mental and physifour, children. SNAP was a life cal health problems, and poorer food; for the hands that planted it; saver for millions of families in educational outcomes. SNAP cushions these threats and yields a strong return on investment.

holds are families with children. SNAP are less likely to be in hands that served it. And we pray poor health, experience fewer for those without enough food in hospitalizations, and are less likely to have developmental and plenty. growth delays than those with similar incomes denied the program. A recent study found that fense Fund.

food assistance before age five were in better health as adults. Specifically, the girls studied were more likely to complete more schooling, earn more money, and not rely on safety net programs as adults.

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Adults who care and have common and economic sense would strengthen and not cut this critical lifeline for children. During the holidays, those of us blessed with enough or too much food can show our gratitude for living in a wealthy country where we can take action and urge our political leaders to put hungry children before rich farmers. And as millions of us sit down to a holiday dinner let us offer a simple Thanksgiving grace:

God, we thank You for this for the hands that tended it; for the hands that harvested it; for the hands that prepared it; for the Children who benefit from hands that provided it; and for the Your world and in our land of

> Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's De-



## Boss Should Not Dictate Health Care Choices

### People are trying to take this right away

BY VALERIE JARRETT Ensuring the full freedom of women as health care consumers to access essential preventative health services is a

where are health decisions more



reproductive health.

ensure that health care decisions are made between a woman and her doctor, and not by her boss, or Washington poli-

ticians.

trying to take this right away from women, by letting private, for-profit corporations and employers make medi-

cal decisions for their emvital component of the Afford- ployees, based on their personal Court will agree that health deciable Care Act (ACA). And nobeliefs.

nies are currently suing to gain tation with their doctors, famipersonal or essential to keep in the right to deny employees ac- lies, faiths, and whomever else their hands, than those regarding

cess to coverage for birth con- they personally trust. The ACA was designed to trol and contraceptive care, which are used by the overwhelming majority of American women in their lifetimes.

the Supreme Court is one filed Today, there are people by Hobby Lobby, an arts and crafts chain whose owners want to be able to take the option for birth control benefits away from their employees.

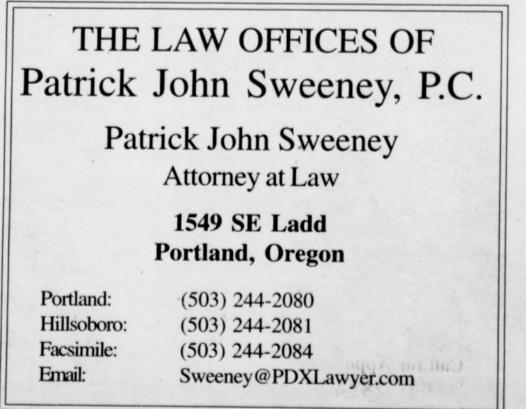
We are confident the Supreme sions in this country should re-A group of for-profit compa- main with individuals, in consul-

be in position to limit women's stitute a major step backward legal access to care, or to seize a controlling interest over the determination. Among the first cases to reach health care choices of women.

away from individuals, and to Chair of the White House

woman's boss dictate her No corporate entity should health care choices would confor women's health, and self-

Valerie Jarrett is a senior To take that type of power advisor to the President and let the personal beliefs of a Council on Women and Girls.



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