



Securing Allies Food in Emergencies (SAFE) Act (S.436)

The Issue: The world is facing the largest food crisis in modern history. Most notably, according to the World Food Programme, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria and the Sahel are among the top countries experiencing the worst of the crisis globally. Overall, in 2022, 1.3 billion children and adults were food insecure worldwide. That is an increase of 10% from 2021. In 2023, over 220 million people globally will most likely suffer from acute hunger.

Malnutrition and poverty fuel each other in a never ending cycle that negatively impacts the most vulnerable people. Malnutrition, for one, exacerbates conditions of poverty by minimizing the economic potential of a population while poverty can lead to food insecurity and increases the likelihood of malnutrition.

The consequences from public health threats, worsening natural disasters and the conflict in Ukraine have been the top contributing factors to the hunger crisis. Fertile farmland and agricultural equipment have been destroyed, interrupting food production, supply, shipment and food security globally. So much so that families are having to leave their homes permanently to find enough food to feed their loved ones.

The Solution: In order to create lasting global change that not only impacts the world but also creates lasting change here at home, it is essential to invest in programs that curb hunger and malnutrition. As a global leader on the world stage with enough resources and tools to do so, the U.S. can step up to address this dire humanitarian crisis and utilize its global food aid funding in the most effective and safe ways possible. The Securing Allies Food in Emergencies (SAFE) Act will confront the hunger crisis by:

- Requiring the USAID administrator to create a strategy to bypass a global food security crisis;
- Providing the USAID administrator with increased authority to procure emergency food assistance in the U.S. so it can reach people when and where it is needed most;
- Prioritizing U.S. agricultural commodities where food is unavailable locally or regionally;
- For areas where U.S. agricultural commodities would not be timely or appropriate, prioritizing local and regional procurements from areas supported by U.S. development programs, including Ukraine;
- Waiving outdated shipping requirements for emergency food aid, which cost taxpayers an additional \$80 million last year alone. This enables USAID to stretch food aid dollars farther; and
- Restricting Russian and Chinese procurements of food aid, including countries on the Department of State's State Sponsors of Terrorism list as well.

Beyond helping those in need, utilizing food aid programs to their fullest extent also provides the opportunity for creating and sustaining allyship with lower-income countries that are susceptible to influence from bad actors. In this way, the U.S. can strengthen its defense and diplomacy efforts abroad.

Supporters: Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Jim Risch (R-ID) introduced the SAFE Act on February 15, 2023. The bill was first introduced in August of 2022 during the 117th Congress.