STATEMENT BY U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS DECRYING FOOD STAMP CUTS,
CALLING ON CONGRESS TO RESTORE FUNDING

Washington, D.C. -- Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director of The U.S. Conference of Mayors today released the following statement about yesterday’s federal House Agriculture Committee vote to cut by $33 billion the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly known as food stamps:

“The U.S. House Agriculture Committee literally took the draconian step of taking food out of the mouths of hard-working families in our nation. The SNAP program allows millions of American families with little or no income to purchase needed food and grocery supplies. So when Congress votes to cut critical programs such as SNAP, mayors understand very clearly what these abstract numbers mean in the real world.

“The House Agriculture Committee majority has not just voted to take money out of a budget line item, but literally to undermine the health of 300,000 of the nation’s neediest children. If there’s a more misguided, mean-spirited and counterproductive way to address decades of deficits in this country, the Mayors of the United States can’t think of one.

“The Conference of Mayors, whose very foundation is built on the goal of strengthening cities and families, strongly opposes these cuts to such a vital program. In fact, mayors from across the country, under the leadership of Boston Mayor Tom Menino and Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, are meeting in Boston today to discuss strategies on how best to feed our citizens by creating local urban food systems. Our children can’t fight for themselves, but the nation’s mayors can and will.”

According to economists at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, an estimated $33 billion cut would cause some 2 million individuals (mostly working poor and seniors) to lose their benefits resulting in removing almost $8 billion from the economy through 2013.

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The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,210 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Find us on facebook.com/usmayors, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.