Awareness + Activism = Change

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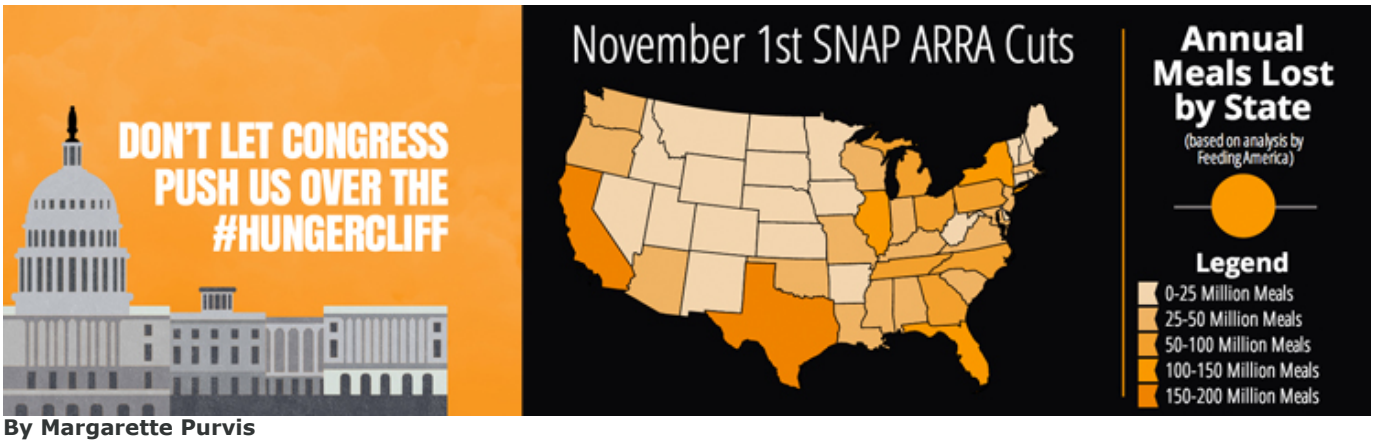

By Margarette Purvis

There are moments in life when you must decide to stand and fight, and THIS is one of those moments. At a time when so much is needed to eradicate hunger, attention has been spent on other issues. But attention MUST be paid to the massive cuts to SNAP (aka food stamps) that took effect earlier this month. These cuts will have a devastating impact on 47 million Americans--including 1.9 million New Yorkers--who rely on food stamps to keep food on the table. Hunger is going to increase dramatically in New York City and across the nation, and thousands of jobs may be lost. The real risk of even more cuts--$40 BILLION worth!--will mean an unprecedented crisis like we've never seen before.

Food Bank For New York City has been battling these morally bankrupt cuts to SNAP for months: raising our voice in opposition, making people aware of the threat, joining with like-minded partners to spread the word, and giving New Yorkers the tools needed to participate in this important fight.

We cannot fight this battle alone. A single voice can speak loudly, but a collective of voices gets heard. A single hand can take action, but millions of hands can activate change. What we need right now is awareness and activism on the ground. When there is understanding of what's at stake and a commitment to get involved, anything is possible. There is still time to make your voice heard. If we simply wait for Washington leadership to do the right thing, we may be waiting a very long time. Neither the White House nor Congress stepped in to beat the November 1st countdown. So it's up to us to do all that we can to affect change. We've certainly been doing that here at Food Bank. I'm incredibly proud of the way our Food Bank family, made up of a citywide network of charities, partners and supporters, have stepped up for this cause.

I want to thank the more than 80 national, state and local organizations around this country that have partnered with us via Hung HungerCliff.org, a national online information and action resource that we launched to raise awareness and mobilize Americans. These critical partners are pushing out our shared platform through their own vast networks, furthering our important message. The partnership of all the organizations that have signed on to this cause has been invaluable in expanding our reach and making sure the stories of the neediest among us get the attention they not only deserve, but require. Help us send a clear message to Congress that cuts to SNAP are unacceptable by sending a pre-written letter - Act Now!

Margarette Purvis is the President and CEO of Food Bank For New York City. Follow her on Twitter at @FoodBank_Prez.