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**Ohio Federal Budget Coalition Praises Budget
Conference Resolution**
*Yet More Required to Ensure Essential Funding for
SCHIP and Food Stamp Program*

Columbus, OH - The Ohio Federal Budget Coalition (OFBC) today praised House and Senate leadership and the members of Congress who supported the FY 2008 Budget Conference Agreement, but stopped short of a complete endorsement saying that the need for expanded benefits among low-income Americans has not yet been met. "The Agreement makes progress in the area of critical human needs, but that progress will be threatened if Congress doesn't follow through on its pledge to expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) program and increase the allocation for the Food Stamp Program," said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, director of the Ohio Second Harvest Foodbank and Coalition member.

The Budget Conference Agreement provides a \$50 billion reserve fund for new spending over five years for SCHIP to protect enrollees from losing coverage and to cover more uninsured children. The Agreement also provides new resources for special education, No Child Left Behind Act, Pell grants and increased funding for Head Start and childcare.

"Congress must ensure that they fulfill their promise to finance the \$50 billion reserve fund as part of SCHIP reauthorization," said Amy Swanson, Executive Director, Voices for Ohio's Children. "Thousands of uninsured Ohio children will gain coverage and Ohio's economy will see increased business activity and new jobs." \$50 billion in additional funding for SCHIP and Medicaid through SCHIP reauthorization would bring an additional \$1.6 billion in increased funding for health coverage for children in Ohio. This

additional funding would help cover the 156,000 uninsured children in our state.

"While the Conference Budget benefits many of the neediest Ohioans, Congress must also ensure that additional funding is allocated for the Food Stamp Program," said Hamler-Fugitt. "One in five children across the nation and over 1 million Ohioans rely on the food stamp program to meet their daily nutrition needs. Over half a million Ohio families have limited or uncertain access to adequate nutritional food and the Food Stamp Program is a necessity for these families." By increasing the amount allocated within this year's Farm Bill, Congress can ensure that fewer Ohio children and families will be faced with deepening poverty and malnutrition.

The Ohio Federal Budget Coalition is a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations committed to advocating for a federal budget that supports the needs of low and moderate income Ohioans.

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