

Oppose the Corker-Coons Proposal to Repeal Food for Peace

- The Corker-Coons bill, S. 2421, proposes to repeal the successful PL 480 Food for Peace program and set up in its place a vast new State Department program outsourced to the United Nations.
- Corker-Coons trades the reliability and transparency of U.S. food donations for transfers of American taxpayer cash to foreign interests without accountability. These cash transfers and vouchers can be used by anyone for anything—not just food.
- Corker-Coons would virtually eliminate the role of the American farmer, mariner, dock worker, and other stakeholders by purchasing commodities abroad instead of requiring the procurement of wholesome U.S. food. This would result in the loss of over 30,000 U.S. jobs and undercut key domestic support for U.S. foreign assistance.
- The Corker-Coons proposal—as part of the President’s FY14 budget and again as the Royce-Engel bill in the House in 2014—has already been rejected by Congress. Ultimately, the bipartisan Farm Bill compromise earlier this year reformed the Food for Peace program and added greater flexibility for USAID. Corker-Coons seeks to reopen the Farm Bill and undermine that compromise.
- The savings and benefits claimed by USAID under the Corker-Coons approach are the same savings and benefits Congress has already rejected as unproven and speculative. For this reason, the Farm Bill directed USAID to provide annual performance reports documenting such claims. The first of these reports has not even been produced yet. Corker-Coons is premature.
- Corker-Coons would repeal cargo preference requirements applicable to the carriage of international food aid and replace U.S. seafarer jobs with foreign seafarer jobs. Cargo preference provides American mariners the chance to earn freight dollars our government is already spending, so we can plow some of that money back into our economy.
- Cargo preference leverages transportation dollars we already have to spend by using them to ensure a viable, U.S. owned, U.S. crewed, U.S.-flag Merchant Marine needed to provide sealift in times of war and national emergency. The U.S. Merchant Marine carried over 90% of the material to Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Food aid subject to cargo preference is by far the greatest source of peacetime tonnage for the U.S. Merchant Marine, and is essential to sustaining U.S. sealift capacity needed to support our nation in times of war and national emergency. Corker-Coons would scuttle the program and our nation’s sealift capacity.