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Nutrition, supplementation during first thousand days of life—from conception to second birthday—radically saves women’s and children’s lives

### Ending hunger, malnutrition, building resilience—a comprehensive strategy

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Global Food Security Act, H.R. 1567, authorizes a comprehensive, strategic approach for U.S. foreign assistance to developing countries to reduce poverty and hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, promote inclusive, sustainable, agricultural-led economic growth, improve nutritional outcomes, especially for women and children, and build resilience among vulnerable populations.

At its core, H.R. 1567 establishes a comprehensive global food security strategy that includes eight mutually reinforcing policy objectives and 15 specific goals and actions designed to develop and implement a whole-of-government strategy.

Essential elements of the strategy include: benchmarks, timetables, performance metrics, and monitoring and evaluation plans; clear and transparent selection criteria for target countries; support of inclusive value-chain development with small-scale producers, especially women;

leverage of resources and expertise through partnerships with the private sector, farm organizations, cooperatives, civil society, faithbased organizations, and agricultural research and academic institutions; harnessing science, technology, and innovation from a myriad of sources, including the 24 Feed the Future innovation labs; and support for improved nutrition for women and children, particularly during the critical first thousand-day window until a child reaches 2 years of age, and with a focus on reducing child stunting through nutrition specific and nutrition-sensitive programs, including related water, sanitation, and hygiene programs.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, there is perhaps no wiser and radically transformative investment that we could make in the human person than to concentrate on ensuring that sufficient nutrition and health assistance is given during the first thousand days of life, a thousand days that begins with conception, continues throughout pregnancy, includes that milestone event called birth, and then finishes at roughly the second birthday of the child.

Children who do not receive adequate nutrition in utero are far more likely to experience immune system deficiencies, making opportunistic infections more debilitating, even fatal, and a large number of lifelong cognitive and physical deficiencies, such as stunting. UNICEF estimates that one in four children worldwide is stunted due to lack of adequate nutrition. By maximizing nutrition during the first thousand days of life, we help ensure that the next 25,000 days or more in a person's life are far more likely to be healthier and disease free.

One objective of H.R. 1567 is to graduate individuals and families and communities and nations from food aid dependency to self-sufficiency, leading to a likely reduction in emergency food assistance over time. That is both humane and a responsible stewardship of taxpayer funds.

By statutorily authorizing this program, which had its roots in the Bush administration and was formalized by the Obama administration, we are also statutorily enhancing congressional oversight by requiring the administration to report to Congress. Thus, the bill requires rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and congressional oversight of the global food security strategy, and it mandates a comprehensive report to ensure accountability and effectiveness.

The approach we have taken in the Global Food Security Act is fiscally disciplined. There is no additional cost to the U.S. taxpayer. This would authorize a straight-lining from 2015 and 2016. USAID will be authorized, however, to do more by more effectively leveraging our aid with that of other countries, the private sector, NGOs, and faith-based organizations, whose great work on the ground in so many different countries impacts so many lives.

As the prime sponsor of H.R. 1567, let me convey my very special thanks to the

gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM), the prime Democratic cosponsor, for her leadership, for her friendship, and for her support. I am deeply grateful to the majority leader, KEVIN MCCARTHY, and his extraordinary floor director, Kelly Dixon, for their pivotal support in the last Congress and this one for the Global Food Security Act.

I would note parenthetically, if it passes today, this will be the second time in 2 years. The clock ran out on the bill in the Senate during the last Congress. I am grateful as well for the strong and abiding support of the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, ED ROYCE, and ranking member, ELIOT ENGEL. They have been tremendous. The Committee on Agriculture chairman, MIKE CONAWAY, made several important policy revisions and has been personally involved in the drafting of this bill, so I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY), my good friend and very distinguished colleague, for his work on this bill and his work on Agriculture in general. I thank him for that leadership. And, of course, a heartfelt thanks to all the other original cosponsors: Mr. FORTENBERRY, Ms. BASS, Mr. CRENSHAW, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SMITH of Washington, and Mr. PAULSEN.

Finally, a great big thanks to our professional staff members, who worked hard to bring this bill to the floor: Joan Condon and Doug Anderson at the Committee on Foreign Affairs; Scott Graves, Bart Fischer, and Jackie Barber at the Committee on Agriculture; legislative counsel Mark Synnes; Jenn Holcomb in BETTY MCCOLLUM's office; Piero Tozzi from my subcommittee; and my chief of staff, Mary Noonan. This is truly a team effort. This will save lives and enhance everyone's life around the world who benefits from the program.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.