

# Foreword: David Beckmann

*The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. —James 5:4*

The world as a whole has made dramatic progress against hunger and poverty in recent decades, and the United States has made progress too. The U.S. poverty rate has dropped by nearly half since the late 1960s,<sup>1</sup> mainly due to the system of federal assistance that was launched back then and improved over the years.

But the earnings of low-wage workers have been stagnant for decades. The earnings of middle-income people haven't gone up much either, contributing to widespread resentment against programs that assist many people in poverty.

Meanwhile, the incomes of wealthy Americans have soared, and big money has come to play a bigger role in U.S. politics.

President Trump and both houses of Congress have advanced budgets that call for more than \$2 trillion in cuts over ten years to programs that provide help and opportunity to low-income people. President Trump also wants to cut assistance to hungry and poor people in developing countries by one-third.

These cuts would dramatically increase hunger and poverty in our country and around the world. So, Bread for the World and its

members are focusing our advocacy on convincing Congress to maintain funding for anti-poverty programs.

But continued progress against hunger in America will depend on improved job opportunities for low-wage workers.

Political leaders across the ideological spectrum agree that our country needs to develop better job opportunities for low- and middle-income Americans. During his campaign for the White House, President Trump repeatedly promised job opportunities to “the forgotten men and the forgotten women.”

This report discusses an array of public policies that would improve job opportunities, especially for low-wage workers. We emphasize proposals that some members of Congress



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