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Moderate Southern Senators, Hunger, and Welfare in the Long 1960s

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This article traces the approach of moderate southern Senators toward domestic hunger and welfare in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Often overlooked in scholarly accounts, these Senators formed a significant minority of the southern delegation. Their behavior demonstrates both the continued possibilities of a more inclusive southern politics after the mid-1960s and the importance of moderate southerners to the Food Stamp Program's major expansion in the years after 1964. At the same time, however, these politicians opposed guaranteed-income schemes and endorsed "workfare" measures promoted by more conservative southerners that conditioned aid on participation in low-wage employment.

Following South Carolina Senator Ernest F. "Fritz" Hollings's February 1969 Senate testimony about the prevalence of hunger and malnutrition in his home state, and poverty tours conducted by William Spong and Herman Talmadge (of Virginia and Georgia respectively), the Nixon administration feared that domestic hunger might become a political liability. A staff memo from April 1969 warned that "southern senators are getting on the hunger bandwagon."[1] While it was politically easier for southern Democrats to critique the federal government's limited commitment to tackling domestic hunger with a Republican in the White House, such a characterization downplayed southern support for anti-hunger measures: a substantial minority of southern Senators – six of twenty-two Senators from the former Confederate states, or eight of twenty-four if including Kentucky in "the South" – supported a significantly expanded Food Stamp Program, a measure that threatened to

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[1] "A Nixon Initiative on Hunger" "DRAFT," 14 April 1969, White House Central Files, Subject Files, Box 13, HE 3-1 [Exec], Hunger and Malnutrition, Richard Nixon Presidential Library, Yorba Linda, California. On these hunger tours see, for instance, David T. Ballantyne, "'A Public Problem Rather Than a Question of Social Welfare': Ernest F. Hollings and the Politics of Hunger," *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture*, 8, 1 (2015), 75–98, 81.

disrupt local low-wage labor arrangements and systems of racial control. Predominantly but not exclusively Democratic, these Senators helped greatly expand the Food Stamp Program's reach and effectiveness in tackling poverty by the 1970s. Ironically, however, these politicians became key allies for food stamp expansion while blocking efforts to enact guaranteed-income schemes (effectively a cash alternative to food stamps) and endorsing efforts to tie public assistance to work (often dubbed "workfare"). This article traces how these moderate southerners approached hunger and welfare-related issues in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

This piece contributes to existing scholarship in two main ways. First, it revises the declension narrative of moderate white southern politicians (that they abandoned an openness to racial change when faced with a widespread white segregationist backlash in the 1950s and 1960s) and cautions against flattening out the experience of southern politics to privilege conservative and reactionary trends as the region's racial caste and one-party Democratic political system gradually broke down. Although politicians opposed to dismantling the region's structures of racial and economic oppression like George Wallace, Strom Thurmond, and Jesse Helms have monopolized scholarly attention, a more moderate political tradition persisted. The civil rights movement undoubtedly caused many formerly moderate southern politicians to become what Tony Badger has termed "closet moderates," but the South in the years after the 1965 Voting Rights Act was more hospitable terrain.[2]

[2] Anthony J. Badger, *New Deal/New South: An Anthony J. Badger Reader* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2007), chapter 7. Badger's recent book places more emphasis on white moderates' successes after the 1950s. See Badger, *Why White Liberals Fail: Race and Southern Politics from FDR to Trump* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), esp. chapters 5–6. For works focussing on reactionary political trends see, for instance, Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012); Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995); Carter, *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich: Race in the Conservative Counterrevolution, 1963–1994* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996). Work on the evolution of a more moderate southern politics after 1965 is relatively limited. For key examples see Nicol C. Rae, *Southern Democrats* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Randy Sanders, *Mighty Peculiar Elections: The New South Gubernatorial Campaigns of 1970 and the Changing Politics of Race* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007); Tim F. Boyd, *Georgia Democrats, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Shaping of the New South* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012); Gordon E. Harvey, *A Question of Justice: New South Governors and Education* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002); David T. Ballantyne, *New Politics in the Old South: Ernest F. Hollings in the Civil Rights Era* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016).

Mid-century southern politics was not monolithic, and there were meaningful alternatives to the conservatism that would become dominant in the region in the generation after the civil rights movement; these more moderate alternatives held sway across much of the region between 1965 and the 1970s. As Gavin Wright has contended, rather than the years after the Voting Rights Act marking an inevitable march toward conservative Republican political ascendancy, biracial politics proved viable in much of the South until manufacturing job losses in the 1990s undermined the economic basis for such political cooperation.[3]

Second, this story highlights the importance – largely overlooked to date – of moderate southerners to explaining shifts in American social provision. It mirrors the findings of recent state and local studies by LeeAnn Lands and Karen Hawkins. As Lands's study of Georgia welfare rights activism in the 1970s highlighted, "New South" politicians, though far from economically liberal, were more responsive to activists' demands for more generous public assistance than were traditional southern Democrats. Similarly, Hawkins's account of the War on Poverty in Craven County, North Carolina stressed the vital role that moderate white and black leadership – and consensus-focussed approaches – played in fostering local acceptance of War on Poverty initiatives, thereby greatly contributing to these programs' successes.[4] Put simply, for all their shortcomings, southern moderates mattered.

Scholarly inattention to white moderates is understandable: the dominant approach of white southern politicians remained one of welcoming farm subsidies while denouncing aid for economically marginal, often black, workers. White southern politicians had also traditionally favored social spending on age- and disability-based public assistance, but had opposed greater funding for means-tested public assistance (commonly stigmatized as "welfare").[5] Agricultural mechanization significantly reduced southern political opposition to national-level welfare provision by the 1960s which allowed the reporting of

[3] Gavin Wright, "Voting Rights and Economics in the American South," in Orville Vernon Burton and Peter Eisenstadt, eds., *Lincoln's Unfinished Work: The New Birth of Freedom from Generation to Generation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2022), 340–88.

[4] LeeAnn B. Lands, "Lobbying for Welfare in a Deep South State Legislature in the 1970s," *Journal of Southern History*, 84, 3 (Aug. 2018), 653–96, esp. 695; Karen M. Hawkins, *Everybody's Problem: The War on Poverty in Eastern North Carolina* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017), esp. 251.

[5] Eva Bertram, *The Workfare State: Public Assistance Politics from the New Deal to the New Democrats* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 22–23, 28. See also James C. Cobb, *The South and America since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), chapter 7. My uses of "welfare" and "social insurance" in this article follow Michael Katz's definitions. See Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*, rev. edn (New York: Basic Books, 1996), ix.

welfare state measures such as the Food Stamp Act and the Economic Opportunity Act from southern-dominated Congressional committees in 1964. (Ten southerners supported the Economic Opportunity Act.[6]) As economic historians Lee Alston and Joseph Ferrie have noted, most of the War on Poverty's benefits were concentrated in the urban North and would encourage further black outmigration from the rural South, at a time when black residents threatened to win political power in plantation counties and were no longer needed for profitable agricultural production.[7] But grudging acceptance of welfare state expansion was premised on maintaining local control of benefits and, in many cases, pushing African American laborers to leave the region by denying them jobs and food.[8] Despite paying lip service to the national hunger tragedy, leading Senate Agriculture Committee members Herman Talmadge and Chairman Allen Ellender (a Louisiana Democrat) treated food stamps primarily as a farmer support – rather than an antihunger – program. Many traditional southern Democrats opposed demands for greater public-assistance spending as inspired by civil rights, and liable to undermine individualism and harm businesses' labor supply.[9]

Scrutinizing moderate southerners helps to explain why food benefits expanded and remained more politically robust than other welfare measures, notably Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), into the 1980s. Focussing on welfare, Eva Bertram centers on the actions of conservative southern Senators Herman Talmadge and Russell Long in erecting "workfare" provisions in the 1960s and 1970s. Though her account of the transformation of American welfare into a system that conditioned assistance on participation in low-wage employment is persuasive, Bertram flattens out the differences between southern politicians on matters of political economy.[10] Though key

[6] *Congressional Record – Senate* (hereafter *CRS*), 23 July 1964, 16787. Yeas were Cooper, Ervin, Fulbright, Gore, Johnston, Jordan, Long, Smathers, and Talmadge, with Yarborough absent but announced in favor. Southerners were 14–10 in favour of Medicare (H.R. 6675), including the announced intentions of absent senators. See *CRS*, 9 July 1965, 16157.

[7] Lee J. Alston and Joseph B. Ferrie, *Southern Paternalism and the American Welfare State: Economics, Politics, and Institutions in the South, 1865–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. 132–42. See also Elna C. Green, "Introduction," in Green, ed., *The New Deal and Beyond: Social Welfare in the South Since 1930* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), xiii.

[8] Greta de Jong, *You Can't Eat Freedom: Southerners and Social Justice after the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), chapter 1.

[9] See, for instance, Nick Kotz, *Let Them Eat Promises: The Politics of Hunger in America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968). For a critique of food stamps as harmful to businesses see Mississippi Senator John Stennis's comments in *CRS*, 4 Oct. 1972, 33655.

[10] Bertram contends that "New South" politicians "largely tracked the positions of such political elders as Long, Talmadge, and Mills on issues of federal public assistance." See Eva

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allies in expanding antihunger provision in the late 1960s and the 1970s, antihunger southern politicians' patronizing views of poor people were compatible with the goals of "workfarist" politicians, meaning that they simultaneously contributed both to the food stamp program's liberalization and to the erection of "workfare state" measures.[11]

President Franklin D. Roosevelt famously dubbed the South "the Nation's No. 1 economic problem" in 1938 when its per capita income was barely half the national average, and although the income gap had narrowed, it remained the poorest census region. By 1966 the median income for all southerners was 76 percent of the national average. Nationally, poverty was disproportionately nonwhite, with 12 percent of white versus 44 percent of nonwhite individuals living in poverty by 1966. But racial income disparities were particularly stark in the South: nonwhite median income there was only 49 percent of white median income, versus 58 percent in the country as whole.[12]

By the 1960s, two main government programs addressed hunger: the commodity distribution program which began in the 1930s, and the Food Stamp Program, made permanent in 1964. Both were locally administered and sought to help farmers dispose of agricultural surpluses. Under commodity distribution, families that qualified for welfare would receive a monthly package of surplus foods, though it was insufficient to provide a nutritious diet for recipients.[13] Moreover, local authorities often used control over welfare eligibility to inhibit black challenges to the racial and economic status quo.[14] The 1964 Food Stamp Act sought to both "strengthen the agricultural economy" and improve nutrition for low-income households.[15] Rather than receiving a

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Bertram, "The Institutional Origins of 'Workfarist' Social Policy," *Studies in American Political Development*, 21, 2 (Fall 2007), 203–29, 209. See also Bertram, *Workfare State*, 70.

[11] On the passage of "workfare" measures in the 1970s, see Bertram, *Workfare State*, esp. chapter 3.

[12] David L. Carlton and Peter A. Coclanis (eds.), *Confronting South Poverty in the Great Depression:* The Report on Economic Conditions of the South *with Related Documents* (Boston and New York: Bedford and St. Martin's, 1996), 42, (quotation) 54; US Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-60, No. 53, "Income in 1966 of Families and Persons in the United States" (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1967), 48; US Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-60, No. 54, "The Extent of Poverty in the United States, 1959–1966" (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1968), 12.

[13] My account of program expansion in the following two paragraphs draws heavily from Jeffrey M. Berry, *Feeding Hungry People: Rulemaking in the Food Stamp Program* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984), chapters 1–2.

[14] See especially James C. Cobb, "Somebody Done Nailed Us on the Cross: Federal Farm and Welfare Policy and the Civil Rights Movement in the Mississippi Delta," *Journal of American History*, 77, 3 (Dec. 1990), 912–36.

[15] Food Stamp Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-525). See also, for instance, Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," 85.

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monthly food package, food stamp participants bought stamps each month (the bonus value depended upon a recipient's income), which they could then spend on any approved food item.

Several features inhibited program participation. First, states and counties decided whether to operate food stamp programs, set their own eligibility criteria, and operated the program through local welfare offices. Second, counties could not operate commodity distribution and food stamp programs at the same time; participation invariably dropped when a locality switched from commodity distribution to food stamp operation. Third, regardless of income, all participants had to buy their stamps, a stipulation that made participation unfeasible for those with limited or irregular cash incomes. (Several officials and early program advocates like Missouri Congresswoman Leonor Sullivan used this purchase requirement to distinguish food stamps from a simple, and more stigmatized, welfare measure.)[16] Thanks to the advocacy of civil rights and welfare rights activists, and the investigative work of northern liberal Senators (notably Robert Kennedy and Joseph Clark) and liberal advocacy groups like the Citizens' Board of Inquiry, domestic hunger was becoming a pressing political issue by the late 1960s. The major areas reformers focussed on were overall program funding (which was far lower than the level needed to cover all those eligible to use food stamps), the value of bonus stamps, and liberalizing eligibility criteria and access to the program.

It was in this context that moderate southern Senators promoted more generous social provision. Including Kentucky, eight of the South's twenty-four senators supported the September 1969 replacement of the Senate Agriculture Committee's food stamp bill with South Dakota Senator George McGovern's more generous alternative. Out of thirteen members of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs (chaired by McGovern), nine cosponsored his substitute measure.[17] Of the eight southern supporters, five were Democrats and three Republicans (the two Kentucky Senators and Tennessee's Howard Baker). All but one was from an Upper or Border South (rather than Deep South) state. Three were older New Deal-influenced politicians: Arkansas's William Fulbright, Texas's Ralph Yarborough, and Tennessee's Albert Gore. Three were moderate Republicans: Tennessee's Howard Baker and Kentucky Senators Marlow Cook and John Sherman Cooper. The other two, South Carolina's Hollings and William Spong of Virginia, fit into the "New South" designation – politicians who embraced a degree of racial moderation and advocated Chamber of Commerce-friendly job training and economic growth measures.

[16] Berry, 30, 51–52, 55.
[17] I address McGovern's bill in more detail later in this article.

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Racial assumptions shaped the way most white southerners (and white Americans more generally) made sense of poverty. Many believed that poverty was a predominantly African American problem caused by individual failings, and that measures to ease poverty were giveaways to African Americans that would undermine individualism. Alabama Congressman Bill Nichols, for instance, contended in 1968 that government help fostered "a certain complacency and dependency within the Negro race as opposed to motives of self-help and self-determination."[18] Politicians routinely received constituent letters connecting antiblack sentiments with opposition to welfare measures.[19] Writing to Virginia Senator William Spong in 1969, a female supporter claimed that "one of the underlying causes of [hunger and poverty] is never mentioned," namely the "unrestrained breeding of illegitimate children by Negroes." The constituent left little doubt that poor black children (specifically males) were undeserving of assistance, for they "make up many of the gangs who roam the cities, robbing, raping, and assaulting innocent passersby."[20]

The region's differing racial politics mattered in shaping southern Senators' approaches to poverty. Though southern states experienced racialized efforts to restrict access to welfare after World War II – notably through "suitable-home" stipulations in state-run Aid to Dependent Children programs – this phenomenon was far less sustained in Kentucky, with its relatively small black population, larger white-poverty population, and traditions of multiparty competition (with conservative and liberal Democratic factions competing with Republicans) than in Georgia.[21] Given the obvious racial dimensions of poverty, it is unsurprising that Senators from states with smaller black populations were more likely to push for aggressive antihunger measures.

There were similar variations in the responses to civil rights activism. Though resistance strategies did not divide neatly into Upper South and Deep South varieties, white political elites in Deep South states like South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi largely pursued total opposition to public-school and university desegregation until the early 1960s. Meanwhile, more legalistic and evasive approaches predominated in Upper South states

[18] De Jong, *You Can't Eat Freedom*, 41.

[19] See, for instance Anthony J. Badger, *Albert Gore, Sr.: A Political Life* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 199, 216; de Jong, 40–41; Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," 86.

[20] Josephine Barber to William Spong, 30 April 1969, William B. Spong Papers, 1966–1972, Accession #9838, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA (hereafter Spong Papers), Box 73, Labor and Public Welfare–Health–Hunger Tour (Comments), May 1969–1970.

[21] Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, 261; Ellen Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers: Past and Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), chapter 3.

such as Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, marked by token school desegregation in some locales, moves to evade the spirit rather than the letter of *Brown* v. *Board*, and the development of ostensibly nonracial grounds for opposing racial change in order to make segregationist politics more palatable nationally.[22] More Upper South politicians showed flexibility on race than their Deep South counterparts, as the identities of those who did not sign the 1956 Southern Manifesto highlighted. In the Senate, only Tennessee's Estes Kefauver and Albert Gore and Texan majority leader Lyndon Johnson did not sign, along with twenty-two Congressmen from Texas, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Florida.[23]

Senators' racial moderation (or, in Yarborough's case, liberalism) overlapped with a commitment to tackling domestic hunger. The most consistently liberal southern Senator, Yarborough, added an African American woman, Marian Robinson, to his staff in 1963, and voted for the 1964 Civil Rights Act. He became a consistent advocate for President Johnson's Great Society initiatives, and either authored or supported Headstart, Job Corps, VISTA, the Higher Education Act, and the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Though an initial supporter of the Vietnam War, Yarborough complained that it had overshadowed Johnson's domestic priorities by 1967, and he soon echoed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous critique by contending that war spending dwarfed the estimated $10 billion needed to feed all hungry Americans. "If you just settled the war," he argued provocatively in 1968 Senate committee hearings on hunger, "you could do that [end domestic hunger] without any more cost or sacrifice."[24] Following a path similar to Yarborough's, Gore had long advocated for an entitlement

[22] The literature on white southern resistance to desegregation is extensive. See especially Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South during the 1950's* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969); Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Anders Walker, *The Ghost of Jim Crow: How Southern Moderates Used* Brown v. Board of Education *to Stall Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); George Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006); Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*; George Lewis, "Virginia's Northern Strategy: Southern Segregationists and the Route to National Conservatism," *Journal of Southern History*, 72, 1 (Feb. 2006), 111–46. Some prominent politicians in Deep South states, like Mississippi's James Coleman, pursued more covert resistance strategies as well. See Walker.

[23] Badger, *New Deal/New South*, 73.

[24] Patrick L. Cox, *Ralph Yarborough: The People's Senator* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 205, 211, 229–31, 241; *Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare; United States Senate; Ninetieth Congress Second Session on S. Res. 281 to Establish a Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs; May 23, 29; June 12 and 14, 1968* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1968), 41.

rather than welfare approach to healthcare for older people and in 1965 he traveled to Independence, Missouri for Johnson's signing of the Medicare law in former President Harry Truman's presence.[25] On civil rights, Gore was cagier. After refusing to sign the 1956 Southern Manifesto and voting for the 1957 and 1960 Civil Rights Acts, he rationalized his opposition to the 1964 Civil Rights Act but then supported the 1965 Voting Rights Act.[26]

Other antihunger Senators were younger moderates. Gore's Republican Tennessee colleague Howard Baker had forthrightly sought black votes (certainly by white southern standards) during his successful 1966 campaign, securing an estimated 15 to 20 percent of their votes.[27] In an October 1966 event held at the historically black Fisk University in Nashville, Baker spoke of racism's "high costs – in human suffering, in economic loss, inferior education, blighted neighborhoods, and infant mortality." He also praised Head Start and advocated for enhanced job opportunities for black Tennesseans, urged "vigorous enforcement of the Voting Rights Act," and voiced support for appointing more black members to draft boards across the state. Critical of "mismanagement and downright corruption" in existing federal antipoverty measures, Baker nonetheless acknowledged the existence of poverty in Tennessee and claimed that "action must be taken to eliminate it" through a $1 billion dollar Economic Opportunity Corporation to "allow individuals, organizations and private businesses to invest in the elimination of poverty."[28] Both Baker and William Spong, a Virginia Democrat elected to the Senate in the same year after defeating the conservative Byrd machine's candidate by a razor-thin margin in the Democratic primary, supported the Voting Rights Act's renewal in 1970.[29]

For South Carolina Senator Hollings, support for antipoverty measures helped him appeal to African Americans without wholly alienating segregationist white constituents – while growing black voter registration made their approval increasingly important in Democratic primaries and general elections, openly courting their votes remained politically problematic in the

[25] Badger, *Albert Gore*, 187–88, 196–97.

[26] Ibid., 184–86, 198–99.

[27] J. Lee Annis Jr., *Howard Baker: Conciliator in an Age of Crisis*, 2nd edn (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), 28, 30.

[28] Howard Baker Jr., "Statement on Civil Rights," 1 Oct. 1966, Senator Howard Baker Speeches and Remarks, 1966–1985 (Digital Collection), Howard H. Baker Jr. Papers, MPA.101.001, University of Tennessee Libraries, Knoxville, Special Collections, at https://n2t.net/ark:/87290/v85boomh, Local Identifier 0012_003587_000434. See also Annis, 24.

[29] Alexander P. Lamis, *The Two-Party South*, 2nd expanded edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 149; *CRS*, 13 March 1970, 7336.

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late 1960s in Deep South settings.[30] Although all except Alabama's George Wallace lost their 1970 statewide contests, gubernatorial candidates in South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama had run openly racist campaigns that year.[31] Facing reelection in 1968 after his first two years in the Senate, Hollings partly embraced War on Poverty programs, especially Head Start, and toured slums with the state National Association for the Advancement of Colored People field director in January 1968.[32] He then touted this support in low-key April 1968 meetings with black ministers and other local notables to court their votes, while he voted against civil rights measures and liberal Supreme Court nominees. Once reelected, he conducted a series of widely publicized poverty tours in South Carolina, urged a great increase in antihunger spending, secured a pilot free food stamp program for extremely poor recipients in Beaufort and Jasper counties, and in 1970 published a book seeking to persuade skeptics of the need for major antihunger spending increases.[33]

Despite the overrepresentation of African Americans among their states' poverty populations, antihunger southerners downplayed the racial dimensions of the hunger problem, an approach these politicians tied to their claims of representing the political mainstream. Spong claimed in April 1969 that "the problem of food deficiency plagues both white and black Virginians" despite "the belief that hunger and malnutrition are racial problems … [being] often reinforced by the activities of black miltants and white extremists."[34] Hollings obscured the problem's racial dimensions in constituent correspondence by noting that, nationally, most hungry people were white.[35] He regularly presented hunger as a national security problem (echoing a rationale for the 1946 National School Lunch Program that conservative southerners had supported): should the government not deal with poverty, extremists would. After all, as he noted on the Senate floor in April 1970, the Black Panther Party was feeding hungry people in California and Chicago.[36] Like Hollings and other successful moderate southern Democrats, Spong regularly identified himself rhetorically with

[30] Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America*, 180–81, emphasizes increased black voter registration in explaining Strom Thurmond's switch to the Republican Party in 1964.

[31] On the 1970 elections see especially Sanders, *Mighty Peculiar Elections*.

[32] Annual Report, 1 Dec. 1968, the South Carolina Conference of Branches, NAACP, 6–7, Isaiah DeQuincey Newman Papers, South Carolina Political Collections, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, available at http://digital.tcl.sc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/idn/id/1219.

[33] Ballantyne, *New Politics in the Old South*, chapters 4–5.

[34] *CRS*, 15 April 1969, 9192.

[35] Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," 86.

[36] *CRS*, 10 April 1970, 11209. See also Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," 84. On the National School Lunch Program see Susan Levine, *School Lunch Politics: The Surprising History of America's Favorite Welfare Program* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

"the political center."[37] When discussing student unrest in June 1970 he urged "young people to work through our democratic system," denounced "violence on the campus," and aligned his views on the topic with conservative Georgia Senator Herman Talmadge.[38]

Alongside racist opposition, another significant hurdle to tackling domestic hunger was the keenness of many politicians to overlook the issue. Official ignorance was common: rather than focussing on public assistance for the region's poor, southern business boosters and politicians typically promoted economic development through luring new industries with financial subsidies and the low cost of doing business.[39] Louisiana Senator Ellender also downplayed the problem. During a Senate Nutrition Committee tour in Florida, Ellender told a Fort Myers interviewer,

> I really believe you could have selected other areas rather than the worst you have because this is going to be spread all over the country and I'm positive that it doesn't show what's really happening in Florida … What should be done is to take the average place and then picture that and not take the worst.

He also complained that touring poor areas of the country served as anti-capitalist propaganda for the Soviet Union. When reporting a visit to a Mrs. Bryant, an unmarried mother of four who earned ten dollars per week from work and received eighty-nine dollars in social security money per month, rather than focussing on poverty or hunger, Ellender considered illegitimacy to be the main concern. "You have a classic case here," he contended, "where this young woman has been having children and the Government is asked to pay for their keeping."[40]

In contrast, antihunger southern Senators like Yarborough, Hollings, and Spong contended that the major hurdle to tackling domestic hunger was informing the wider public that hunger and malnutrition were significant problems. In Senate hearings in January 1969, Yarborough claimed – overly optimistically, in retrospect – that "the dramatization of the problem during

[37] "Shifting 70s: Change and Challenge," *Spong Report*, Dec. 1970 ("political center"); "A Personal Message," *Spong Report*, July 1971, both in Spong Papers, Box 151, Public Relations – The Spong Report, 1968–71. On Spong's establishment bona fides see Lamis, 151.

[38] "A Personal Message: Open Forums Bridge Gap," *Spong Report*, June 1970, Spong Papers, Box 151, Public Relations – The Spong Report, 1968–71.

[39] Cobb, *The South and America since World War II*, chapter 3; Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," esp. 78. See also Robert Sherrill, "Why Can't We Just Give Them Food?", *New York Times Magazine*, 22 March 1970, 28–29, 91, 93–94, 96, 98, 101–3.

[40] *Hearings before the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs of the United States Senate, Ninetieth Congress Second Session and Ninety-First Congress First Session on Nutrition and Human Needs; Part 5A – Florida; Immokalee, Fla., March 10; Ft. Myers, Fla., March 11, 1969* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1969), 1819–20.

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the past 2 years … has aroused the American conscience to the point that at last we will see the elimination of poverty, hunger, and malnutrition."[41] In April Spong argued, "we cannot, ostrich-like, bury our heads in the sand and hope that these problems will go away."[42] Hollings's 1970 *The Case against Hunger: A Demand for a National Policy* was consciously pitched at skeptics rather than those already convinced that domestic hunger was a significant problem that needed addressing.[43]

Drawing upon medical evidence connecting malnutrition with stunted mental development, these Senators presented food stamp spending as fiscally conservative. Yarborough claimed in 1968, "we don't need to talk about justice and humanitarianism. This is just sound government, sound economics."[44] In his June 1969 report on "Food Problems in Virginia," Spong claimed, "If we, as adult citizens, do not accept some responsibility for seeing that these children receive the nutrients necessary for proper development today, we may be forced to accept responsibility for the unemployable adult of tomorrow."[45] In constituent correspondence he presented antihunger spending as reducing "the potential welfare rolls of the future."[46] Putting it more succinctly, Hollings repeatedly argued that "it's cheaper to feed the child than to jail the man."[47]

These southerners also sought to square their calls for far greater antihunger spending with a commitment to local control. Southerners like Agriculture Committee chairman Ellender, who had supported the 1946 National School Lunch Act (which secured federal money while retaining local administration of these funds), often leaned on the need for local involvement to rationalize the decision of many local governments not to operate any food stamp program.[48] Antihunger southerners like Cook, Spong, Baker, and

[41] See *Hearings before the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs of the United States Senate, Ninetieth Congress Second Session and Ninety-First Congress First Session on Nutrition and Human Needs; Part 2 – USDA, HEW, and OEO Officials; Washington, D.C., January 8, 9, and 10, 1969* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1969), 241 (Yarborough); "Spong Begins Tour to Find Malnutrition," *Progress-Index* (Petersburg, VA), 5 April 1969, 7.

[42] *CRS*, 15 April 1969, 9192.

[43] Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," 83, 85.

[44] *Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States … 1968*, 41.

[45] *CRS*, 16 June 1969, 15926.

[46] Spong to S. Cooper Dawson Jr., 14 May 1969, Spong Papers, Box 73, Hunger Tour (Comments), May 1969–1970.

[47] Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," 83–84. See also Ernest F. Hollings, *The Case against Hunger: A Demand for a National Policy* (New York: Cowles Book Company, Inc., 1970), 143.

[48] Levine, *School Lunch Politics*, 77–79, 86. For examples of conservative southern Senators emphasizing local control over food stamps in the late 1960s see, for instance, *Hearings before the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs … Part 2*, 217 (Ellender); *CRS*, 24 Sept. 1969, 26846 (Ellender), 26876 (Spessard Holland).

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Hollings counselled the desirability of local cooperation in antihunger programs and the shortcomings of federal bureaucracy (Hollings termed it a "red-tape worm"), but they argued that absent local initiative, the federal government needed to intervene. During discussion over the food stamp bill in the Senate in September 1969, Spong remarked that "programs which are well operated on the local level are preferable to federally administered programs, since those on a local level are more likely to understand the specific nature and problems of the political jurisdictions." But despite this preference, "recent statistics indicate the need for food assistance programs in every locality."[49]

The major proposals these antihunger southerners advocated in 1969 closely followed those suggested by McGovern, a leading Senate liberal. They included waiving any purchase requirement for the poorest participants, making eligibility requirements more flexible for potential recipients with irregular employment, publicizing the availability of food stamps for poor individuals, providing more flexible purchase options so recipients could receive stamps more frequently and could buy a percentage of the monthly purchase cost if they preferred, and establishing a food stamp program in every locality.[50] They had significant successes that year. First, following Hollings's February Senate testimony, the Senate restored the budget for the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs (it had initially been cut from $250,000 to $150,000).[51] Then, in September, the Senate replaced the Agriculture Committee's food stamp bill with the McGovern-sponsored alternative. The McGovern measure differed from the Agriculture Committee's original bill in several important ways: it increased the bonus value of stamps to allow recipients to afford a "low-cost" diet (rather than the "economy" level under which few recipients could eat a nutritious diet), it allowed recipients to make a partial purchase of food stamps in months when they could not afford the full purchase price, it provided free stamps for the poorest recipients, it stipulated that families should spend no more than 25 percent (rather than 30 percent) of their total income on stamps, it streamlined application procedures and set national eligibility standards, it provided for the Secretary of Agriculture to create food stamp programs in counties where local officials refused to do so, and it provided more overall program funding – rising

[49] *Hearings before the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs … Part 5A*, 1831 (Cook); Hollings, *The Case against Hunger*; *CRS*, 24 Sept. 1969, 26845 (Spong quotations). For a similar argument from Baker see "Draft Article for Reader's Digest on Poverty [1967]," Box 136, Folder 5, 18, Howard H. Baker Jr. Papers, MPA-0101, University of Tennessee Libraries, Knoxville, Special Collections.

[50] Spong argued for these changes in September 1969. See *CRS*, 24 Sept. 1969, 26845.

[51] Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," 81.

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from $1.25 billion in fiscal year 1970 to $2.5 billion in fiscal 1972 (versus $750 million and $1.5 billion in the Agriculture Committee's bill).[52] The vote was 54 to 40, with eight southerners (including Kentucky's Senators) supporting this substitution, which made them vital to the bill's success.[53] Though several antihunger policy goals did not make it to the final bill, the eventual 1971 food stamp amendments set uniform national eligibility standards. This was particularly helpful in southern states with traditionally stingy welfare regulations: in South Carolina, for instance, it meant that the maximum income a family of four could earn to be eligible for food stamps doubled from $180 to $360 per month.[54] Funding for the program increased in the early 1970s, and the 1973 amendments provided for all counties to switch to operating a food stamp program by mid-1974.[55]

But the pace of change for needy southerners was halting, owing to the program's design and its local administration. Despite the opposition of antihunger Senators and welfare activists to it, the requirement that food stamp recipients buy stamps rather than receive the program's benefits automatically was not abolished until the 1977 Food and Agriculture Act.[56] Moreover, welfare advocacy groups continued to rail against the program's administration at the local level: South Carolina's Council for Human Relations, a state branch of the liberal Southern Regional Council, issued a 1972 report entitled "Keeping the Poor in Their Place" that detailed myriad ways in which administrators limited poor people's ability to participate in the program. These included uneven application of regulations; the trusting of employers over sharecroppers in confirming applicants' income levels; a lack of outreach to inform residents of their eligibility for food stamps or regulations that would help them use the program (such as receiving stamps by mail); harsh, judgmental, and deliberately unhelpful actions from caseworkers; insulting conditions for recipients in food stamp offices (such as a lack of public bathrooms, long lines, and overcrowded small waiting rooms, which meant that many recipients had to wait outside); and county welfare board members – their membership either all white or with only token black

[52] *CRS*, 24 Sept. 1969, 26852–68, 26875.

[53] Ibid., 26880.

[54] "Keeping the Poor in Their Place," 1, Box 29, Prog, Welfare, Nutrition, Food Stamps, 1972, South Carolina Council on Human Relations Records, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC (hereafter SCCHR Records). Hollings identified problems with access to the Food Stamp Program in his 1970 book. See Hollings, *The Case against Hunger*, esp. 153–54.

[55] Maurice MacDonald, "Food Stamps: An Analytical History," *Social Service Review*, 51, 4 (Dec. 1977), 642–58, esp. 649–52.

[56] On opposition to the purchase price from welfare rights activists, see Felicia Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights: Politics and Poverty in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 134.

membership, and with no welfare recipients on any county board in the state – holding their positions as a patronage reward, and consequently possessing neither an interest in increasing program participation nor the expertise to do so.[57]

Furthermore, welfare rights activists attacked the Food Stamp Program's restrictions on welfare recipients' choices and the way it demeaned them. Giving stamps to poor people rather than money, New York activist Beulah Sanders contended, limited their ability to respond to other emergencies that required cash on hand. Meanwhile, Louisiana resident Annie Smart argued that using food stamps in shops "strips you of your dignity."[58] Similarly, welfare rights activists in Virginia urging a guaranteed-income scheme attacked existing welfare provision as "lousy. It gives people low payments and bad treatment, often tells people how to spend their money."[59]

The development of a more economically and racially inclusive southern politics faced some key setbacks, stemming partly from the defeat of several antihunger southerners for reasons largely unrelated to their welfare views. Several lost to more conservative Republican or Democratic challengers: Gore and Yarborough in 1970 and Spong in 1972. In Spong's case, he had the misfortune of running at the same time as President Nixon's landslide 1972 reelection campaign. At times, antiwelfare themes combined with other complaints, as when one constituent's letter addressing Gore's 1969 vote against South Carolinian Supreme Court nominee Clement Haynsworth urged the Tennessee Senator not to "waste my hard-earned tax dollars, which you so love to redistribute to the lazy, by having your staff send me one of your innocuous form letters."[60] But rather than welfare policies, the key campaign issues concerned resentment related to school integration, these Senators' opposition to the Vietnam War, and their votes against southern Supreme Court nominees Haynsworth and Harrold Carswell. In Gore and Yarborough's cases, inattention to local political organization also played a role in their defeats.[61]

More significantly, the ways these politicians made sense of poverty meant that most antihunger southern Senators simultaneously supported food stamp expansion and versions of "workfarist" policies aimed at conditioning government assistance on poor people working. As Eva Bertram has demonstrated, though welfare contraction and "workfare" policies gained momentum in

[57] "Keeping the Poor in Their Place," SCCHR Records.
[58] Kornbluh, 133–35, quotation on 134.
[59] "State Issues on Welfare in Virginia," n.d. [1969?], Spong Papers, Box 73, Hunger Tour (Comments), May 1969–1970.
[60] Badger, *Albert Gore*, 216. See also ibid., 199.
[61] Ibid., chapter 9; Cox, *Ralph W. Yarborough*, chapter 13. On the shortcomings of their local political operations see Badger, *Albert Gore*, 239, 247–48, 255; Cox, 262–63.

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the 1980s and 1990s, groundwork was set in 1970s measures like Herman Talmadge's Work Incentive Program, and Russell Long's Earned Income Tax Credit.[62] Though supportive of antipoverty measures, these Senators were reluctant to endorse "welfare" directly or challenge prevalent stereotypes of the deserving/undeserving poor. In fact, these senators often presented anti-poverty or antihunger spending as an *alternative* to greater welfare expenses. In form-letter responses to constituent correspondence concerning "hunger and poverty" in 1968, Albert Gore endorsed "most of the programs designed to assist in alleviating" such conditions but expressed preference for "programs which provide training and jobs for those who need them most."[63] Baker's ideas for tackling poverty also stressed educational opportunity, job training, and access to better employment.[64] Hollings used his prior record of industrial boosting and promotion of job-training measures to rebut criticisms of his late 1960s antihunger activism. He did not contest that some portion of welfare recipients were undeserving, but instead emphasized the number of "women, children, and invalids" who would benefit from greater antihunger spending.[65] Likewise, Spong sympathized with constituents complaining about able-bodied welfare recipients, but contended that helping the children of "those persons who prefer not to work" would "reduce the potential welfare rolls of the future."[66]

Most antihunger southern Senators endorsed work requirements for able-bodied welfare recipients, even as they sought to avoid the most punitive stipulations. During the debate over the 1967 Social Security Amendments (H.R. 12080), most antihunger southern Senators supported Senator Robert Kennedy's amendment (No. 465) to remove work requirements for mothers receiving AFDC payments when their children were not in school, a measure that Kennedy presented as countering the breakdown of families, and one that implicitly recognized motherhood as work. Louisiana Senator Russell Long, in contrast, attacked the measure as encouraging laziness: "if she has a child younger than 16, the mother would not have to do so much as swat a mosquito off her leg as a condition for getting aid from the government."[67] Five southerners (Fulbright, Gore, Hollings, Spong, and Yarborough), all of whom then supported McGovern's substitute food stamp bill in 1969, supported

[62] Bertram, *Workfare State*, chapter 3.
[63] Albert Gore to Ken Kinnett, 20 June 1968, Series XX, Box D32 5/8, "1968 Law & Order (2 of 2)," Albert Gore Sr. Senate Papers, Albert Gore Research Center, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee (hereafter Gore Papers).
[64] Baker, "Statement on Civil Rights."
[65] Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," 87.
[66] Spong to Miriam Mann, 7 Jan. 1970, Spong papers, Box 73, Labor and Public Welfare–Health–Hunger, 1970–1971. See also Spong to S. Cooper Dawson, 14 May 1969, Spong Papers, Box 73, Hunger Tour (Comments), May 1969–1970; *CRS*, 16 June 1969, 15926.
[67] *CRS*, 21 Nov. 1967, 33542.

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Kennedy's amendment versus fourteen who opposed it. The amendment passed narrowly, by 41 to 38, but was subsequently cut from the bill during the conference committee negotiations.[68] In contrast, only Yarborough supported another Kennedy amendment (No. 460) – defeated by 40 to 31 – to create federal work projects to employ welfare recipients "for whom regular, competitive employment cannot be found, or for whom training is not suitable," a serious problem for many African Americans in plantation areas given the mechanization-driven collapse in agricultural employment.[69]

Work requirements for welfare recipients were very popular with constituents. Politicians and constituents routinely voiced opposition to helping the able-bodied poor. In a 1970 letter to a skeptical constituent, Spong touted his backing of the 1967 Social Security Amendments which "required certain welfare recipients to take job training or face a loss of benefits."[70] Hollings, a vocal food stamp advocate, remarked on the Senate floor in 1972, "I do not believe we ought to tax one man to pay another man who will not work, and I do not think Government should make welfare more attractive than work."[71] Spong's constituent newsletter polled recipients on fifteen issues in July 1971, including asking whether "able-bodied welfare recipients should be required to take available work as a condition of receiving aid." The results, based upon the first 10,000 responses, were stark. Ninety-four percent supported work requirements for welfare recipients versus 3 percent who opposed, the most unanimous response to all the questions posed. In contrast, respondents only opposed legalizing marijuana by a 78 to 10 percent margin.[72]

Moreover, as with their liberal antipoverty allies, many antihunger southerners embraced patronizing arguments about poor people. Though traditional southern Senators like Ellender pursued this line more aggressively, antipoverty southerners also contended that ignorance alongside a simple lack of money contributed to poverty and malnutrition. In Senate hearings concerning the National Nutrition Survey in 1970, Ellender contended that most of malnutrition "is mental. That is, they don't know any better." In a similar vein, Kentucky's Marlow Cook – who supported significant Food Stamp Program expansion – bemoaned that

[68] Ibid., 33545; *CRS*, 13 Dec. 1967, 36304. In the November vote on the Kennedy amendment, Senator Cooper (KY) was absent, and Senator Thruston Morton (KY) opposed it.
[69] *CRS*, 21 Nov. 1967, 33558–59, quotation on 33558; de Jong, *You Can't Eat Freedom*, 20.
[70] Spong to Mrs. Howard E. Mann, 7 Jan. 1970, Spong Papers, Box 73, Labor and Public Welfare–Health–Hunger, 1970–1971.
[71] *CRS*, 4 Oct. 1972, 33657.
[72] *Spong Report*, July 1971, Nov. 1971, Spong Papers, Box 151, Public Relations – The Spong Report, 1968–71.

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as we move away from food distribution … and more into food stamps, then we are going to see to it that the people get less and less of the things they really ought to have because they are going to buy things that really are not going to provide a proper diet.[73]

Spong's 1969 report on hunger in Virginia urged educational efforts to dovetail with antihunger measures: "Time and again, health, welfare and antipoverty personnel noted that ignorance and misunderstanding of proper nutrition, good housemaking and wise budget planning compounded the problems of low and marginal income families."[74] Addressing Hollings's views of poverty, Ruth Singer, a staffer who drafted parts of his 1970 *Case against Hunger* book, wrote in an office memo, "Senator you always distress me with your remarks about trash, the bottom of the bottom, etc." Singer then offered a description of hunger from author Wright Morris, who "puts it a little more compassionately."[75] Though these Senators sought to remedy poverty conditions, they seem to have had little faith in the capacity of poor people to make good choices.

Most antihunger southern Senators supported food stamps over cash payments. Beyond beliefs that poor people would not spend their money wisely, a guaranteed income also threatened to significantly disrupt regional wage rates. The consideration of Nixon's Family Assistance Plan (FAP) in 1970 and 1972 showcased these concerns. FAP would have replaced existing food and welfare provision with cash payments ($1,600 for a family of four initially), and, following some revision, a smaller value of food stamps; though still below the poverty level, this funding was far more generous than existing AFDC payments in southern states. After passage in the House (H.R. 16311), FAP was defeated by a coalition of conservatives and liberals in the Senate Finance Committee in 1970, and another version failed in the Senate in 1972. Although they did not need to vote on the Senate floor, most antihunger southern Senators would likely have opposed FAP in 1970, with the exceptions of Arkansas Democrat Fulbright and Tennessee Republican Baker (who was "quite solid" for the bill in September 1970). When FAP was defeated 10–6 on the Senate Finance Committee, Fulbright

[73] *Hearings before the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs of the United States Senate, Ninetieth Congress Second Session and Ninety-First Congress First Session on Nutrition and Human Needs; Part 3 – The National Nutrition Survey; Washington, D.C., January 22, 23, 27, and 28, 1969* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 722 (Ellender), 1048 (Cook). Arkansas Senator William Fulbright had also stressed that "poverty and the factors which perpetuate it are rooted in ignorance" during the Senate debate over the passage of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act. See *CRS*, 23 July 1964, 16761.

[74] *CRS*, 16 June 1969, 15926.

[75] Memo from Ruther S. Singer to Hollings, Box 668, "The Case against Hunger, Gen. (1 of 2)," Ernest F. Hollings Papers, South Carolina Political Collections, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC (hereafter abbreviated to Hollings Papers).

voted for it, and Gore opposed it.[76] The reasons for FAP's defeat are well known: to name a few, its benefits were too stingy for liberals and welfare rights activists, the work requirements were too limited for conservatives, the prospect of a guaranteed income threatened to upend racial and economic hierarchies in the South, and from May 1970 the Nixon administration stepped back from its earlier forthright support of welfare reform in favor of using it as a tool for attacking political opponents. But the behavior of anti-hunger southern Senators towards a guaranteed income scheme is instructive for demonstrating the limits of their qualified embrace of more generous public assistance.[77]

FAP threatened significant disruption to the region's low-wage economy. Georgia governor Lester G. Maddox, elected as a militant segregationist in 1966, contended that, should FAP pass, "You're not going to be able to find anyone willing to work as maids or janitors or housekeepers."[78] When FAP came to the Senate again in 1972, Louisiana Senator Russell Long argued that setting a guaranteed income at the poverty level would put over half of Mississippians on welfare: "Welfare would provide so much payment and work would have so little reward left that people would rather go fishing than work at a shipyard, a cotton gin, a shoe factory, a hosiery mill, or any place else there that would provide an opportunity for earning a living."[79]

In constituent correspondence, form letters from Albert Gore in 1968 noted his reluctance "to support legislation which would guarantee to everyone a certain amount of income regardless of their ability to help themselves."[80] He later voted against Nixon's family assistance plan in the Senate Finance Committee in October 1970, though his issue mail responses were unclear as to whether his objections to the bill were its work requirements or the cash benefits it provided.[81] Hollings claimed in a letter to Wilbur J. Cohen (a leading figure in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare during the Johnson administration) that "a plan on the order of

[76] Daniel P. Moynihan, *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income: The Nixon Administration and the Family Assistance Plan* (New York: Random House, 1973), 525, 533.

[77] For accounts of FAP's defeat see, for instance, ibid.; Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism* (Lawrence: Kansas University Press, 1996); Bertram, "Institutional Origins of Workfarist Social Policy"; Bertram, *Workfare State*; Felicia Kornbluh, "Who Shot FAP? The Nixon Welfare Plan and the Transformation of American Politics," *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture*, 1, 2 (2008), 125–50.

[78] Moynihan, esp. 342, 378–79, quotation on 378–79. See also Bertram, "Institutional Origins of Workfarist Social Policy," 211–13.

[79] *CRS*, 3 Oct. 1972, 33411.

[80] Form letter, 23 May 1968, Series IV, Box 137, 1968 OEO, Gore Papers.

[81] "Senate Unit Bars Nixon's Proposal on Welfare, 14–1," *New York Times*, 9 Oct. 1970, 1.

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FAP has great potential," but claimed that his own emphasis on antihunger measures rather than FAP stemmed from "acting on a measure that is politically possible," and reiterated his contention that "[d]oling out cash is no substitute for food. Given cash the hungry poor will deprive themselves of food and spend more to give their children clothing, medicine and the other necessities of life. The landlord will charge more for rent, and the hungry poor will be … still hungry."[82] In a 1971 interview, he denounced Nixon's "money stamps" plan as "the best way I know to legalize [welfare] abuses."[83]

Nixon administration official and political chameleon Daniel Patrick Moynihan emphasized the political calculus in Hollings's and like-minded southerners' opposition. He claimed that privately the South Carolinian "would acknowledge that food stamps were a halfway house toward a guaranteed income, and that a full-fledged proposal such as the Family Assistance Plan would accomplish even more of what he hoped for. But, he felt, the South was not ready."[84] Other potentially sympathetic southern Senators surely agreed that FAP was too drastic a change. Gore termed FAP an "almost radically revolutionary program" in August 1970. Fitting into Moynihan's criticism of the Senate as "less competent as a legislative body than the House," and his characterization of the Senate Finance Committee as "wrongheaded," his *Politics of a Guaranteed Income* needled Gore for later labelling FAP "utterly inadequate" and voting against the bill in the Senate Finance Committee.[85]

In a 1972 Senate debate over Russell Long's workfarist Earned Income Tax Credit scheme, which would give low-income workers with children a tax credit, Lawton Chiles, a moderate Florida Democrat, again displayed this general preference for tying public assistance to work. Chiles noted that Long's scheme would "help … the working poor in a way which would not be giving them a welfare check. It would not be taking away the worker's pride. It would put him in a position where he would not feel he has to be a recipient of welfare." The measure passed easily in the Senate by 49 to 5; of all southerners (including Kentucky), only Kentucky Senator Cooper opposed it.[86]

[82] Hollings to Dr. Wilbur J. Cohen, 8 Dec. 1970, Box 668, "The Case against Hunger, Correspondence, Gen., 1970, Dec," Hollings Papers. See also *CRS*, 4 Oct. 1972, 33655–57. On Cohen see, for instance, Edward D. Berkowitz, "Wilbur Cohen and American Social Reform," *Social Work*, 34, 4 (1989), 293–99.

[83] Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," 89.

[84] Moynihan, 396; also cited in Ballantyne, "A Public Problem," 89.

[85] Moynihan, 440 ("less competent," "wrongheaded"), 259 ("almost radically revolutionary," "utterly inadequate"). It is not clear from Moynihan's book where Gore made the "utterly inadequate" comment.

[86] *CRS*, 30 Sept. 1972, 33011–14, vote tally on 33014.

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When the Family Assistance Plan came up for a floor vote in October 1972, the overwhelming southern opposition to guaranteed-income schemes was on full display (though opposition to FAP was certainly not confined to the South). That month, Russell Long successfully pushed to table the Ribicoff administration version of FAP (a slightly more generous guaranteed-income program than in 1970 from which the Nixon administration had stepped back). Long's motion passed by 52 to 34, with near-unanimous southern support: nineteen southern Senators supported tabling the Ribicoff amendment, with three not voting (including Kentucky senators, twenty supported versus one opposed).[87] Hollings labelled Senator Abraham Ribicoff's proposal "an incredibly excessive amendment which, in my State of South Carolina, would have increased the welfare rolls by five-and-one-half times the present level," before attacking the House-passed welfare bill as killing "our hopes of serving the poor through institutions instead of by cash handout." Rather than a guaranteed income, Hollings's proposed solution was to get food stamps to those eligible and to provide facilities for school lunches in schools across the country. "Let us hold up on cash until we get some facilities built and these basic problems solved," he claimed.[88] In his constituent newsletter, Spong sought to split the difference politically. He noted concerns with both the Ribicoff plan and the Senate Finance Committee's "workfare" alternative: "all would increase the number of people on welfare rolls and all would cost more than the existing program." Given the major costs involved he advocated testing the competing plans before making wholesale changes.[89] Such a pilot scheme passed the Senate 46–41 in October 1972 with overwhelming southern political support.[90]

Opposition to guaranteed-income measures, however, did not preclude a significant body of southern Senators from promoting the continued liberalization of the Food Stamp Program, as the passage of the 1977 Food and Agriculture Act – which eliminated the purchase requirement for food stamp recipients, making it effectively an in-kind income supplement – demonstrated. The final bill passed by 69 to 18 with only three southerners voting against it, but the vote on an amendment to restore the purchase requirement was particularly instructive for highlighting the significant bloc of antihunger southern Senators. That amendment failed by 31 to 64, with eight southerners (plus both Kentucky Senators) opposing it, versus thirteen

[87] *CRS*, 3 Oct. 1972, 33419. See also Bertram, "Institutional Origins of Workfarist Social Policy," 213.

[88] *CRS*, 4 Oct. 1972, 33655–57.

[89] "A Personal Message from Senator Spong," *Spong Report*, Oct. 1972, Spong Papers, Box 151, Public Relations – The Spong Report, 1968–71.

[90] Bertram, "Institutional Origins of Workfarist Social Policy," 214; *CRS*, 4 Oct. 1972, 33642.

in favor (supporting the purchase requirement's restoration).[91] By ending the need to buy food stamps, these antihunger southerners supported increasing access to the program and effectively turning it into an automatic noncash benefit, even as they were loath to endorse "welfare" directly.

In August that year, President Carter announced his Program for Better Jobs and Income, a hybrid jobs and guaranteed-income welfare proposal. As with Nixon's FAP in 1970, the measure attracted liberal and conservative opposition and did not make it to the Senate floor. But despite growing political headwinds, these failed attempts at welfare reform coexisted with a Food Stamp Program that expanded greatly, became easier to access, and remained more politically robust than other welfare measures.[92] Antihunger southern Senators formed an important part of the coalition that pushed Food Stamp Program expansion and liberalization in the 1960s and 1970s; historians should take them seriously when reckoning with southern political history and the history of welfare provision. Despite the post-1980s conservative Republican political ascendancy in the South, moderate southern politicians held sway in much of the region from the mid-1960s through the 1970s. But though they were far from vehement advocates of using welfare provision to keep poor people in low-wage work, their understandings of poverty proved compatible with workfare measures. Gaining momentum from the 1970s, these policies focussed more on ensuring that poor people worked, rather than on bringing them out of poverty.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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[91] *CRS*, 24 May 1977, 16351 (final vote), 16307 (Curtis amendment). The following southern senators voted against the Curtis amendment: Bentsen, Bumpers, Chiles, Ford (KY), Huddleston (KY), Hollings, Johnston, Morgan, Sasser, Stone.

[92] Jeff Bloodworth, "'The Program for Better Jobs and Income': Welfare Reform, Liberalism, and the Failed Presidency of Jimmy Carter," *International Social Science Review*, 81, 3–4 (Fall–Winter 2006), 135–50, 142–45. On challenges to the Food Stamp Program in the 1970s see especially Sam Rosenfeld, "Fed by Reform: Congressional Politics, Partisan Change, and the Food Stamp Program, 1961–1981," *Journal of Policy History*, 22, 4 (Oct. 2010), 474–507; and Caitlin Rathe's article in this special issue.