

A People's Testimony: The Right to Food from the Mississippi Delta, USA

Presented by Tyler Yarbrough

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Honorable Members of the European Union,

Building on what the National Right to Food Community of Practice has submitted, I bring you greetings from the Mississippi Delta, a 19 county region nestled along the Mississippi River, carrying the spirit of my ancestors - the enslaved, the sharecropper, the farmer. A land that birthed the blues. A land of resilience.

I come not empty handed but also bearing witness: from the people who till the soil, stock the shelves, and stretch every dollar to feed their families. In the United States, over 44 million people live in food insecurity. In the Delta we face the brunt of this reality. In America, the rules are bent, bent toward corporations that dictate prices and markets, while small grocers and family farmers fight to survive, leaving families hungry. The laws meant to ensure fairness - our antitrust protections like the Robinson Patman Act - sits idle. Government's role is not charity - it is justice. It is to wake those laws up, to enforce them, and to make sure the rules work for people, not just profits.

That is why we urge you, in this review, to:

1. **Encourage the United States. to continue investments in community-led food solutions in rural America and beyond**
2. **Encourage the US to Ensure funding for food and nutrition programs, public healthcare coverage, and rural hospitals**
3. **Press the United States. to enforce its antitrust laws so independent grocers and farmers can compete fairly with big business.**
4. **Encourage the U.S. to restrict and make transparent Corporate campaign donations and lobbying by food and agribusiness**
5. **Call on the United States to recognize the right to food as a human right and incorporate them as part of the United Nations'Sustainable Development Goals deliverables**

When communities get a level playing field, a doctor writes prescriptions for produce, not just pills. A neighborhood store once filled with junk food now sells local greens. And through projects like the Pea Project and Next California Project, we hope that land in our agricultural region can feed communities first.

But Today, in the Delta, 90% of what we grow is exported - often to **your** nations under subsidies - while 90% of what we eat is imported. As a result, the Delta region has the highest rates of food insecurity and health related diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and stroke in our nation.

The right to food is not radical. It is practical. It is ambitious. It can unite community and business, left and right. So that every family know that healthy food is within reach - at a fair price - in a system that rewards resilience, not just scale.

And fairness must reach further - to clean air in Memphis, TN to safe water in Jackson, MS and to people everywhere, not as victims of uneven development, but as co-creators of a more equitable, resilient world

Thank you for listening and the potential of relaying these recommendations and additional ones from my American colleagues back to our country.

Thank you.

Tyler Yarbrough