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CLINTON ADMINISTRATION TAKES NEW STEPS TO REDUCE HUNGER, IMPROVE NUTRITION AND STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY

December 23, 1999

Today the Clinton Administration will announce a strengthened Community Food Security Initiative to reduce hunger, improve nutrition, and help families become self-sufficient. The Community Food Security Initiative includes three important actions: launching a new "2000 in 2000 Campaign" to generate 2,000 public and private commitments to fight hunger over the next year; releasing a new guide for communities to improve nutritional access for underserved groups; and unveiling a new handbook from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on how communities can reduce hunger and pollution by improving food recovery efforts. The Administration today will also release data showing that efforts launched in 1997 have now recovered over 7.5 million pounds of food for the hungry.

STRENGTHENING THE FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE FOR AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES. Even as the Federal government plays an important role in the fight against hunger through national programs such as Food Stamps, WIC, and school lunch/school breakfast, an important part of the solution lies in partnerships with grassroots efforts. Under the leadership of Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, the Community Food Security Initiative is forging innovative partnerships with nonprofit groups, businesses and individuals, as well as with state, local, and tribal governments. Today, the Clinton Administration will announce it is taking three new executive actions to help communities solve problems of food insecurity and hunger:

- **"2000 in 2000" Campaign to Generate 2,000 New Government, Nonprofit, and Private Sector Commitments to Fight Hunger and Increase Food Security.** Spearheaded by the USDA Community Food Security Initiative, this effort will build on new anti-hunger partnerships, including ones aimed at: helping homeless people move to independence, increasing community gardens, expanding Food Stamp public education efforts, increasing volunteer community service activities fighting hunger, and helping small farmers sell food directly to school meals programs. USDA Community Food Security Liaisons, now working in all fifty states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, will provide technical assistance to and "one-stop-shopping" to local entities wishing to make and implement commitments. Charitable and faith-based organizations will be critical partners in virtually all local efforts.
- **New USDA Guide to Help Communities Improve Access to Nutrition Assistance Programs.** "The National Nutrition Safety Net – Tools for Community Food Security," includes specific guidance on how to improve program access for the homeless, as well as many other underserved groups such as immigrants, working families, and senior citizens.
- **"Waste Not, Want Not", a Joint USDA/EPA Handbook on How Food Recovery and Donations Help Protect the Environment.** This handbook can help municipalities and business across the country understand how they can increase their donations of excess food, helping feed the homeless and other hungry Americans. Noting that food waste is one of the largest components of the solid waste stream, the guide urges the inclusion of food recovery

efforts in all solid waste and recycling plans.

NATIONAL EFFORTS TO PREVENT WASTE OF FOOD ALSO PAYING OFF FOR THE HUNGRY. Along with these new actions on the Community Food Security Initiative, USDA will announce it has recovered over 7.5 million pounds of food since 1997, which would otherwise have gone to waste and was instead used to feed the hungry. This food recovery effort, initiated by President Clinton through an Executive Memorandum issued on November 23, 1996, has already received the "Hammer Award" for reinventing government. It continues to expand its efforts, at virtually no cost to the government, to help farmers, ranchers, and others donate excess food to feed the hungry.

Kevin Galvin
776 9494 ^{WR}
AP Reporter -
WH correspondant

**"Measuring Food Insecurity in the United States:
Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Hunger, by State, 1996-1998"**

Q&A

October 14, 1999

Q: What are the key findings from this research?

A: Although most U.S. households are food secure, during the period 1996-98 some 10 million households (9.7 percent of total) were food insecure. The incidence (percent of all households) of food insecurity is significantly above the national average in eleven states - Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Washington - and the District of Columbia. By contrast, 20 states -- most of them in the Midwest, Great Lakes, and Northeast -- had rates of food insecurity significantly below the national average.

Among households that are food insecure, 3.7 million experienced hunger. The incidence of hunger was significantly above the national average in six states - Arkansas, Florida, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, and Washington - and the District of Columbia.

Q: What does food insecurity mean for a household?

A: Food insecurity means that a household has limited or uncertain access to enough safe, nutritious food for an active and healthy life. These households have reduced quality and variety of meals, and may have irregular food intake. There may be a need for recourse to emergency food sources or other extraordinary coping behaviors to meet their basic food needs.

Q: What does hunger mean for a household?

A: Hunger is the more severe level of food insecurity. It means insufficient or irregular food intake results in periods of hunger (uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food) for at least some family members.

Q: What factors cause variation in food security and hunger from state to state?

A: Income is a major factor. State poverty rates account for more than half of the variation in state food insecurity rates. Research on state-level causes of food insecurity is still in early stages. This report represents the first state estimates reliable enough to form the basis for such research. Likely factors in addition to the poverty rate include cost of living, participation in the Food Stamp Program, and strength of extended family and community support systems.

Q: Why was a three-year average used to estimate state food insecurity?

A: The annual Current Population Survey sample is not large enough to obtain a

**Welfare Reform
Question and Answer
November 23, 1999**

Q: How is welfare reform going?

A: In 1992, President Clinton promised to end welfare as we know it, and three years after the enactment of the welfare reform law, welfare reform is working. We've seen revolutionary changes to promote work and responsibility: welfare rolls are down by nearly half to their lowest level in 30 years, nearly four times more of those on welfare are working, and the employment rate of people receiving welfare in the previous year has increased by 70 percent. All fifty states are meeting the law's overall work requirement. Numerous independent studies also confirm that record numbers of people are moving from welfare to work.

Background

Caseloads: The number of welfare recipients is at its lowest level since 1969 (30 years) and the percentage of Americans on welfare is at its lowest level since 1967 (32 years). The welfare rolls have fallen by 48 percent, or 6.8 million, since January 1993, when they stood at 14.1 million. State-by-state numbers show 31 states have had declines of 50 percent or more. A recent report by the Council of Economic Advisers finds that the implementation of welfare reform is the single most important factor contributing to the widespread and continuous caseload declines from 1996 to 1998. CEA estimates that the federal and state program and policy changes implemented as a result of welfare reform account for approximately one-third of the caseload reduction from 1996 to 1998. The strong economy has also played an important role, accounting for approximately ten percent of the decline.

Employment and earnings of current welfare recipients: Nationally, the percentage of welfare recipients who work rose from 7 percent in 1992 to 27 percent in 1998, with the remainder fulfilling their participation requirements through job search, education, and training. The earnings of those on welfare have increased about 11 percent between 1997 and 1998 (from \$506/month to \$553/month).

Employment and earnings of former welfare recipients: Results from a national survey released in August by the Urban Institute found 69 percent of recipients had left welfare for work, and 18 percent had left because they had increased income, no longer needed welfare, or had a change in family situation. The report found that women leaving welfare were working at nearly identical rates, types of jobs, and at salaries as other mothers with incomes up to 200 percent of poverty or \$32,000 a year for a family of four. This study found former welfare recipients had a median hourly wage of \$6.61, which is actually higher than other low-income mothers whose median hourly wage is \$6.06. More than two-thirds of employed former recipients are working 35 hours per week or more, which is slightly higher than other low-income mothers.

A recent General Accounting Office report based on state surveys found that between 63 and 87 percent of adults have worked since leaving the welfare rolls, results similar to state studies

funded by the Department of Health and Human Services. GAO found annual earnings ranging from \$9,512 to \$15,144 among those who had left welfare. When we factor in other supports for working families, such as EITC, food stamps, and child care, families are better off than they were on welfare.

Q: Has poverty among young children increased under the Clinton/Gore Administration?

A: No. From 1993 to 1998, the poverty rate among children under age six has declined from a high of 26 percent (6.1 million children) to 20.6 percent (4.8 million children). This recent decrease came after a 52 percent increase between 1978 and 1993. There has been a decline in poverty not only among young children, but all children. Overall, there are now 2.2 million fewer children living in poverty than in 1993 (15.7 million in 1993 compared to 13.5 million in 1998) and, under President Clinton, the child poverty rate declined from 22.7 percent to 18.9 percent – the largest five-year drop in nearly 30 years. There have also been historic declines in the African-American and Hispanic child poverty rates, though both remain too high.

Q: Are there more children living in extreme poverty?

A: No. We're encouraged to see that the number of children living in extreme poverty (50% of the federal poverty level or \$6,400 for a family of three) dropped by nearly 600,000 between 1997 and 1998 (from 6.4 million to 5.8 million). The rate of extreme child poverty also dropped, from 9 percent to 8.1 percent. Since President Clinton and Vice President Gore took office, 1.2 million fewer children are living in extreme poverty – a drop of 18 percent, from 7 million in 1993 to 5.8 million in 1998.

Q: Do these numbers show those at the bottom are worse off as a result of welfare reform?

A: No. The new Census data show record increases in income, a slight decrease in income inequality, and record decreases in the poverty rate. In 1998, every income group experienced a real increase in their income, showing that all parts of the income scale are benefiting from the growing economy. Under Reagan and Bush, average household income for the poorest one-fifth fell 4 percent; under the Clinton/Gore Administration it has increased over 10 percent.

Q: What has this Administration done to help families move out of poverty?

A: President Clinton and Vice President Gore have worked for the last six and a half years to raise incomes, make work pay, help families make a successful transition from welfare to work, and extend opportunity to all. This includes raising the minimum wage, expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, enacting the Children's Health Insurance Program, and promoting investment in underserved communities. The latest data released by the Census Bureau show we are making tremendous progress.

The President has warned Congress not to renege on the bipartisan commitment to help states and communities finish the job of welfare reform. He vigorously opposed attempts to cut the welfare block grant and the EITC tax refund for low income workers. The EITC lifted 4.3 million people out of poverty in 1998. To finish the job, we need to reauthorize the Welfare-to-Work program, raise the minimum wage, and increase our investment in childcare, transportation and housing vouchers.

Q: What has the President done to help welfare reform succeed?

A: The President started reforming welfare early in his first term, granting waivers to 43 states to require work and encourage personal responsibility, expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and the minimum wage to make work pay, and pushing the Congress for nationwide welfare reform legislation which he signed into law in August 1996. Since 1996, he has launched The Welfare to Work Partnership, which now includes 12,000 businesses that have hired an estimated 410,000 welfare recipients; issued an executive order to ensure the federal government hired welfare recipients (over 14,000 to date under the Vice President's leadership); and supported the launch of the Vice President's Welfare to Work Coalition to Sustain Success, an array of national civic, service, and faith-based groups working to help new workers with the transition to self sufficiency. He has also fought for and won additional funds for welfare to work efforts, including \$3 billion for the Welfare-to-Work grant program administered by the Department of Labor, a new tax credit to encourage the hiring of long term recipients, funding for Welfare-to-Work transportation (\$75 million in FY 2000), and Welfare-to-Work housing vouchers (50,000 in FY 1999 and another 60,000 new Section 8 vouchers in FY 2000). And on April 10, the President put in place new welfare rules that make it easier for states to use TANF funds to provide such as child care, transportation, and job retention services for working families. The Welfare-to-Work amendments included in the recent budget agreement will also help states and communities more effectively serve hard-to-serve welfare recipients and low-income non-custodial parents (mostly fathers).

Q: What is the Administration doing to make sure families get the food stamps and Medicaid for which they are eligible?

A: In July the President took executive action that will go a long way to ensure working families access to food stamps, by: (1) allowing states to make it easier for working families to own a car and still be eligible for food stamps; (2) simplifying food stamp reporting rules to make it easier for families to get food stamps; and (3) launching a nationwide public education campaign and a toll-free hotline to help working families know whether they're eligible for food stamps. Families with earnings up to 130 percent of poverty (\$8.50 an hour for a family of three) can be eligible for food stamps to supplement their income and help buy food for their families, but only two of five working families eligible for food stamps actually apply for and receive them.

HCFA has been working hard with states to ensure that people who should be enrolled in Medicaid are, in fact, enrolled. Medicaid is a joint partnership between HCFA and the

states. States have primary responsibility for operating their programs. Nevertheless, HCFA continues to provide technical assistance and intends to be aggressive in ensuring that states follow all federal rules involved with Medicaid eligibility determinations.

Since the beginning of 1997, HCFA has issued numerous letters designed to inform and educate States of their responsibilities under Medicaid. A new guidebook for states released last month is just the latest of our efforts to work with states to ensure that people moving off cash assistance programs, and working families who may not realize they are eligible for assistance, still get Medicaid benefits. The guidebook also makes clear that states' TANF-Medicaid application must furnish a Medicaid application upon request and may not impose a waiting period. States must also process Medicaid applications without delay. Extensive outreach efforts are also under way in all 50 states to enroll children in health insurance as part of the implementation of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

In addition, both USDA and HHS are working aggressively to enforce the law requiring states to provide Medicaid and Food Stamp applications upon request and ensuring they process them without delay, regardless of the state rules governing the TANF application.

Background:

Between 1995 and 1998, the number of people receiving food stamps fell more than 3 times faster than the number of people in poverty. Recently released estimates from the Bureau of the Census show that the number of people in poverty fell from 36.4 million in 1995 to 34.5 million in 1998. Administrative data from the Food and Nutrition Service show that over the same period food stamp participation fell from an average of 26.3 million to 20.0 million. (Food stamp participation has fallen still further since then: in June, the program reached 17.8 million people).

There are a number of factors contributing to the decline in food stamp participation. One is the strength of the nation's economy, which allowed participants to find work, reducing their need for food stamps. Another is the success of welfare reform in moving participants from welfare to work. At the same time, some working families don't realize they are eligible for food stamps and have difficulty obtaining them, leading some participants to leave the program unnecessarily and discouraging others from applying for benefits. Finally, some changes in program rules under welfare reform restricted the participation of immigrants and unemployed childless adults.

FOOD INSECURITY TALKING POINTS

- The United States continues to enjoy the strongest peace time economy in our nation's history. As a result of the strong economy and the development of hundreds of thousands of new jobs, poverty in America is at a twenty-year low. We have made a lot of progress but there is still a lot of work to be done and hunger still persists.
- Congress required USDA in 1990 to develop a way to determine food insecurity in United States. USDA reports released in 1997 and 1999 both show that hunger is a significant issue in Texas. A recent Urban Institute study of former cash assistance recipients found that in 1997 1/3 had to cut the size of their meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough food. Texas and California exceeded the national average for households where families with low income children worried about or had difficulty buying food.
- USDA has produced two reports on food insecurity and hunger. The first report was issued in 1997. Research reports for 1996-1998 indicate **10 million** households experience food insecurity. Of those households experiencing food insecurity, **3.7 million experience hunger**. These numbers indicate that serious work still remains in order to eliminate hunger in America.
- State-by-State data gives local people an indication of the problem.
- Food insecurity-Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.
- Hunger-The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food. The recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.

sufficient number of interviewed households for statistical analysis. Analysts combined the most recent 3 years of data in order to get statistically reliable state estimates. Year-to-year differences for states are usually not statistically significant. In the future, as more years of data are collected, analysts will be able to observe trends in state food insecurity by using three year rolling averages similar to the way the Census Bureau monitors state-level poverty.

* Local needs just good of food - ~~the inflation, then~~
when in Detroit, Wayne St.

'gleam' the 'B' stuff for farmers
'recover' for wholesalers (retails)

* last Feb 99 announced - Oct conference - focus video

* 2x12K - ~~last year~~ HP, Grain Foods, 2-11th floor,
ASF Service Assoc, Comm-FS Coal. - up's

* Access stats:

²/₃ dept FS not running

* why now?

Q&A
Community Food Security Initiatives
DRAFT 11/22/99

Q: Who vouches for the quality of the food 'gleaned' and saved for the hungry? Where is it coming from?

A: It is up to the local authorities to judge the quality of the food but guidelines have been provided in USDA's "Citizens Guide to Food Recovery" and reiterated in the USDA/EPA joint piece we are releasing tomorrow. For the most part the rule was "When in doubt – throw it out" but EPA has insisted on a more environmentally friendly slogan so it is now "When in doubt – compost."

The food comes from a number of sources including field-gleaning projects, farmers market food recovery programs, food recovery from wholesale or retail outlets and food drive donations.

Q: Is the Community Food Security Initiative new or are these just the latest steps?

A: The initiative has been underway since Secretary Glickman announced it in February 1999. On November 23, 1996, the President signed an Executive Memorandum which directed all federal agencies to work with USDA to help increase the recovery and gleaning of excess food and distribution to the hungry. The Vice President convened the first ever National Summit on Food Recovery and Gleaning on September 15, 1997 to generate national attention for the issue. In October 1999, USDA held a National Summit on Community Food Security in Chicago, where Secretary Glickman announced that 7 million pounds of food had been recovered at that point.

Q: Are there any good statistics or data on the problem of access to nutritional programs (the problem the new USDA guide is meant to address)?

A: USDA released a report last week that described changes in the food stamp program participation rates from 1996 to 1997. One fact from the report is that more than one-third of all people eligible for food stamps have not been taking advantage of this program and frankly we're not sure why. Part of the reason is the incredible economy but we also believe that part of the reason is that many people, especially with low-wage jobs, confuse food stamps with other government assistance and therefore think they are not eligible.

The results of this study are bolstered by recent statistics that show a steady decline in overall food stamp participation since 1993.

That's why this summer the President rolled out a food stamp awareness campaign to get the word out that there is help for those who need it.

The efforts we're talking about today, continuing to promote new ideas for gleaning and food recovery efforts both public and private, are another step in combating the continued problem of hunger in America.

Q: What are some of the business, NPs etc that will likely join 2K in 2K? Have any signed up already, and who are they?

A: Hewlett-Packard, Giant Foods, American School Service Association, and the Community Food Security Coalition.

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Tuesday,
December 21,
1999

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BUSH DOUBTS U.S. DATA SHOWING TEXAS IS 2ND IN HUNGRY FAMILIES

From Tribune News Services

December 21, 1999

MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE Texas Gov. George W. Bush said Monday that he doesn't believe a federal report that says the country's second-largest state also is the nation's second-hungriest.

Bush also questioned the timing of the Agriculture Department report that said 5 percent of Texas families sometimes go hungry.

"I'm sure there are some people in my state who are hungry," Bush said during a question-and-answer session with reporters at West High School in Manchester. "I don't believe 5 percent are hungry."

He also said Texans who are hungry should be fed, perhaps by getting them food stamps.

Bush, who is running for the Republican presidential nomination on a theme of "compassionate conservatism," suggested the report--covering 1996-98--might have been released to embarrass him.

"Yeah, I'm surprised a report floats out of Washington when I'm running a presidential campaign," he said. "It seems like a lot of reports are floating out of Washington."

Agriculture Department spokesman Andy Solomon denied there was any intent to embarrass Bush.

"It might be tough to believe that during the best economy in generations hunger persists in America and in Texas, but, as our study and as food banks in the governor's state can tell you, it does," Solomon said. "Part of the difficulty in addressing the problem of hunger is getting people to acknowledge it."

The study found that only Oregon has a higher proportion of hungry families.

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Bush says he doesn't believe federal report on Texas hunger

By Jim Vertuno, Associated Press, 12/21/1999 09:13

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) If Texas Gov. George W. Bush doubts the number of hungry people in his home state, he can come see them himself, say advocates for the poor and food bank officials.

Food is flying off the shelves as food banks try to serve poor people during the holiday season, food bank officials said.

Bush sparked criticism from advocates for the poor across the state Monday by saying he doesn't believe a federal report that the country's second-largest state is also the second hungriest.

"I'm sure there are some people in my state who are hungry," Bush said at a campaign stop in Manchester, N.H. "I don't believe 5 percent are hungry."

Food bank officials, however, say distribution in some areas is 38 percent higher than 1998, while an 8 percent increase in contributions has failed to keep pace.

"Where can I get ahold of Mr. Bush? I'd like him to come visit our food bank to see how empty our shelves are right now. We're scrounging for food," said Amelia Gonzalez, executive director of the Community Food Bank of Victoria, Texas.

"Oh my. How can I put this tactfully? If he says he will see to it there are no hungry people in Texas, that's good news," said Judy Carter, executive director of the Capitol Area Food Bank in Austin.

"Certainly, our experience is there are many hungry people."

Bush, who is running for the Republican presidential nomination, also questioned the timing of the Agriculture Department report that said 5 percent of Texas families sometimes go hungry.

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Boston.com / Latest News / Washing...eve federal report on Texas http://www.boston.com/dailynews/35...h_aays_he_doesn_t_believe_f.shtml

addressing the problem of hunger is getting people to acknowledge it."

The report covered the years 1996-98. Bush took office in 1995.

"It's a shame he's not better informed about such an important issue," said Celia Hagert, nutrition policy analyst for the Center for Public Policy Priorities, an advocacy group for poor Texans. "It's not some new report from some left-wing organization. It's not telling a new story. Texas has always had high levels of poverty and high levels of hunger."

The report measured the percentage of households that experience "food insecurity" defined as difficulty in getting adequate, nutritious and safe food as well as hunger and "uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food."

The report found 12.9 percent of Texas households experienced food insecurity, compared with a national average of 9.7 percent. Five percent experienced hunger, compared with 3.5 percent nationally. Only Oregon had a higher proportion of hungry families, 6.8 percent.

In 1995, Bush vetoed a bill that would have created the Texas Food Security Council to study hunger in Texas and help local officials solve their hunger problems. The council would have included members from state agencies as well as from nonprofit food policy councils and agriculture sectors.

Bush's veto said a private entity could be more effective.

Americans often don't recognize hunger in the United States, said Liz Morris, spokeswoman for Interfaith Ministries in Houston, which coordinates a network of 90 church food pantries.

Hungry children won't have the bloated bellies of starvation but still need food, she said.

"Hunger looks different in the United States than it does in Third World countries," she said. "We don't have a lot of starvation but we do have chronic malnutrition people who water down cereal or skip breakfast for their children."

"People may be employed but not making enough to feed their families," she said. "At the end of World War II, somebody with the sweat of his brow and labor of his hands could feed their family. Today, without a degree, you can't make enough to feed your family."

Bush sounded of like mind on that last point in a speech to students Monday afternoon. He told them how important it is to work hard in school, go on to higher education and become conversant with the Internet.

"Years ago, you could make a pretty good living if you could lift things," he said. "Today, you need to think."

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Bush scoffs at report citing hunger in Texas

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T O D A Y ' S N E W S

Bush scoffs at report citing hunger in Texas

Tuesday, December 21, 1999

By KATHARINE WEBSTER
The Associated Press

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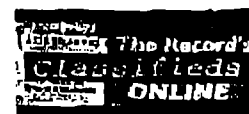
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"It might be tough to believe that during the best economy in generations, hunger persists in America and in Texas, but as our study and as food banks in the governor's state can tell you, it does," Solomon said. "Part of the difficulty in addressing the problem of hunger is getting people to acknowledge it."

The report, covering 1996-98, was released in October. Challenging comments from Bush were published Saturday by the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

Bush's skepticism about the scope of the problem incensed Texans who provide food to the poor.

"Where can I get a hold of Mr. Bush? I'd like him to come



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from fatigue, irritability, and inability to concentrate. *Id.* Another recent study shows that,

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DR. VISIT

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MEDIA 10

Bush scoffs at report citing hunger in Texas

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