

**Tony Hall Remarks**  
**2019 Hunger Free Communities Summit**

Good Morning.

It is wonderful to see everyone here today. Hunger Free Communities have always been close to my heart, and to see so many leaders in the field gathered in one place gives me a great feeling.

Before I go on I want to take a moment to thank all of our sponsors for making the Summit possible – especially our key sponsors General Mills and Kroger. I also want to thank our generous friends at Share Our Strength, USDA, Bread for the World, and Feeding America. And of course, I want to send a special thank you to everyone at the University of the District of Columbia for hosting our event this year.

Years ago as a Member of Congress I had the opportunity to chair the House Select Committee on Hunger. This experience led me all over the world, and gave me a comprehensive

understanding of how seriously hunger can harm individuals, families, communities, and nations. I also realized that while hunger looked more obvious in impoverished parts of the world, it was also causing havoc in our own back yards in the United States. Hunger can be found in every congressional district in the country, and my own constituents in Dayton, Ohio were no exception. Dayton had a hunger problem, and I wanted answers on how to fix it.

And so our Committee travelled all over the country to witness how other communities were analyzing and addressing their hunger issues. We gathered stories, heard testimonies, and collected data that showed us that the key to ending hunger in this country could be found in the communities themselves. Our Committee compiled a list of fourteen steps to achieve a hunger-free community. These included establishment of emergency food systems, identifying barriers to purchasing nutritious foods, engaging public and private organizations and resources, coordinating efforts effectively, emphasizing nutrition education,

and many others. These steps were collected through input from leaders like you, and it is truly heartening to see the level of progress being made in many parts of the country.

Today, I am speaking to you not only as someone with experience from the viewpoint of an elected official. I am also proud to lead a Hunger Free Community organization in the Dayton area. In Dayton, we have found – as many of you have – that it takes a holistic effort to address hunger. My own community has struggled with how to address food deserts, economic and industrial downturn, and the social and structural issues that can hinder progress.

While I do believe we are making progress, I am excited to continue to learn from all of you. Because as you know, the challenges we face can make our work complicated. These include issues of racial inequity, issues of housing, issues of a hungry and aging population, and much more. I am especially happy to see that there is a focus on the root causes of hunger at the summit

this year, and that there are so many experts that can speak about this over the next two days. While the issues facing us are as diverse as the number of communities represented in this room, there are basic and fundamental injustices that cause hunger everywhere.

As Hunger-Free Community leaders, we know the importance of building partnerships in our communities, but we also know that we need national allies to help build us up, share our stories, and inspire us to expand our missions and vision. The next two days will expose us to a variety of perspectives, opinions, strategies, best practices, and also warnings. I encourage everyone at this summit to be active participants – to engage and challenge the speakers, and to provide your own valuable insights into the many conversations. While we are in Washington I also want you to consider how we can inspire a greater level of advocacy around issues of hunger. We all have our own stories to tell and experiences to share. These are the essence of successful

advocacy, and they can encourage the building of both public and political will to end hunger across the United States.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Duke Storen. Duke serves as the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services in Virginia, where he leads a high performing team of mission-driven professionals in their mission to help people triumph over poverty, abuse, and neglect. Working in all sectors, including academia, community-based not-for-profits, state government, and consulting, Duke has dedicated his time and efforts to social policy and programs designed to bring relief to low-income populations. Prior to joining VDSS as Commissioner, Duke served as the Senior Vice President of Government Relations & Program Development at Share Our Strength. He also worked under two administrations at USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. Most importantly, he has been a terrific role model for the anti-hunger

community, and a wonderful friend of the Alliance to End Hunger and the Hunger Free Communities Network.

Please join me in welcoming Duke Storen.