

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) will participate in a fast on Monday, October 15 to bring attention to the need to reduce global poverty.

Bachus is the lead Republican sponsor of the Jubilee Act, which would make poor countries eligible for debt relief. The bill will allow developing countries overwhelmed by crushing debt payments to devote more of their limited resources to reducing hunger and towards the health, education, and social needs of their citizens.

"Today in dozens of poor countries all over the world, little boys and girls are born into poverty, disease, and hunger. Fasting for one day cannot begin to compare with their painful and heavy burdens. But I am convinced that if more Americans learn about the hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of lives that can be saved through debt relief, they will see this as something we ought to do out of the goodness of our hearts," Bachus said.

Bachus has spoken with Reverend David Duncombe, a minister from Washington State who is fasting for 40 days on Capitol Hill to urge action on the bill. Nationwide, about 14,000 Americans are expected to take part in the fast for one or more days.

The Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2007 (H.R. 2634) would cancel the debts of up to 25 countries that are not now eligible for debt relief. It builds on the success of debt relief efforts that Bachus has played a key role in championing since 1999. In countries where debt relief has been approved, debt is down by two-thirds and spending on vital health, education, and social services has increased significantly.

"Debt relief is not the total solution to poverty, hunger, and disease, but it is a necessary first step. It is where the journey should begin to free these countries of the burden of debt, the chains of poverty, and the shackles of despair to enable them to minister to the economic and social needs of their people and children," Bachus said.

To mark the conclusion of the 40 day fast period, Bachus will speak at a Jubilee Prayer Breakfast on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, October 16. The program will also include remarks from Reverend Duncombe and representatives of several religious organizations. The push for the

bill comes partly from the fact that 2007 is a Sabbath year when both the Old and New Testaments call for an end to debt and slavery.

Bachus is also a lead cosponsor of the Global Poverty Act, which makes the reduction of extreme global poverty a foreign policy priority for the United States. The legislation was approved by voice vote in the House on September 25.