

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 7, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

The undersigned members of the House of Representatives urge the Department of Agriculture (Department) to act swiftly to ensure children have access to nutritious food during these difficult economic times. Specifically, we urge the Department to renew waivers to enable the implementation of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) and to waive the Area Eligibility Requirement during the entirety of school year 2020-2021.

As you know, Congress authorized the use of these waivers in the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*.<sup>1</sup> Schools and non-profit partners across the country have utilized these waivers to continue providing meals to children during the COVID-19 pandemic. The flexibility to operate SFSP and SSO is essential for schools to continue serving children when school buildings are not accessible, which will continue to be the case in many parts of the country during the coming school year. These waivers also provide critical administrative relief for already over-burdened school staff and facilitate the implementation of health and safety measures by limiting the contact required during meal service.

Simply put, without these flexibilities, some schools will be unable to continue providing meals for students next year.

In March and April 2020, approximately one in four adults ages 18-64 with children younger than 19 reported food insecurity in their household during the previous month.<sup>2</sup> Rates of food insecurity are significantly higher in Black households, with approximately 37 percent of Black households with children reporting food insecurity in March and April 2020 compared to approximately 18 percent of white households.<sup>3</sup> It is unconscionable that the Department would fail to utilize all of its available authority to ensure that children can continue to receive the nutritious meals they need to learn next year.

---

<sup>1</sup> 29 U.S.C. § 2601.

<sup>2</sup> Elaine Waxman, *Many Families Are Struggling to Put Food on the Table. We Have to Do More.*, Urban Wire (May 7, 2020), <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/many-families-are-struggling-put-food-table-we-have-do-more>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

We therefore urge your swift action to extend these waivers in the school meal programs. Please contact Maria Martirosyan at [Maria.Martirosyan@mail.house.gov](mailto:Maria.Martirosyan@mail.house.gov) with any questions. Thank you for your attention this urgent matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Ilhan Omar  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Chellie Pingree  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Cindy Axne  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Karen Bass  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Sanford Bishop  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Earl Blumenauer  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Suzanne Bonamici  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Brendan F. Boyle  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Julia Brownley  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Cheri Bustos  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Salud Carbajal  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Tony Cárdenas  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

André Carson  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Joaquin Castro  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Judy Chu  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

David Cicilline  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Yvette D. Clarke  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Emanuel Cleaver  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Steve Cohen  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jim Cooper  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jim Costa  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

TJ Cox  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Angie Craig  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Susan A. Davis  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Peter DeFazio  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Mark DeSaulnier  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Veronica Escobar  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Adriano Espaillat  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Lois Frankel  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Ruben Gallego  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jimmy Gomez  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Alcee L. Hastings  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Chrissy Houlahan  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Pramila Jayapal  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Andy Kim  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Ann Kirkpatrick  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Rick Larsen  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Madeleine Dean  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Rosa L. DeLauro  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Debbie Dingell  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Anna Eshoo  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Bill Foster  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Marcia Fudge  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

John Garamendi  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Sylvia Garcia  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Raúl M. Grijalva  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jahana Hayes  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jared Huffman  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Eddie Bernice Johnson  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Marcy Kaptur  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Ro Khanna  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Ron Kind  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Ann McLane Kuster  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

John B. Larson  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Al Lawson, Jr.  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Susie Lee  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Mike Levin  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Alan Lowenthal  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Carolyn B. Maloney  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Doris Matsui  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

James P. McGovern  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Joseph D. Morelle  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jerrold Nadler  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jimmy Panetta  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Ed Perlmutter  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Mark Pocan  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

David Price  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Harley Rouda  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Barbara Lee  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Andy Levin  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Ted Lieu  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Stephen Lynch  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Sean Patrick Maloney  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Betty McCollum  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Gwen Moore  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Seth Moulton  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Grace Napolitano  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Tom O'Halleran  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Frank Pallone  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Chris Pappas  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Stacey Plaskett  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Ayanna Pressley  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jamie Raskin  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Lucille Roybal-Allard  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Bobby Rush  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Tim Ryan  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Mary Gay Scanlon  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Kim Schrier, M.D.  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Donna E. Shalala  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Darren Soto  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Haley Stevens  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Bennie Thompson  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Rashida Tlaib  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

David Trone  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Juan Vargas  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Peter Welch  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Susan Wild  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

John Yarmuth  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Linda T. Sánchez  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jan Schakowsky  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

David Scott  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

José E. Serrano  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Adam Smith  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Abigail D. Spanberger  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Mark Takano  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Dina Titus  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Lori Trahan  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Lauren Underwood  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Filemon Vela  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Bonnie Watson Coleman  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jennifer Wexton  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Frederica Wilson  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS