

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

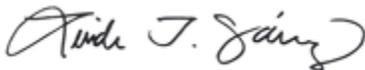
As we work together to help our nation through the COVID-19 pandemic, we write to urge you to protect our constituents that depend on the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Following conversations with WIC agencies in our districts as well as media reports of depleted supplies of WIC-eligible products in supermarkets and other vendors throughout our country, we are concerned that WIC recipients will be unable to access the nutritious food they need.

We urge you to exercise authority given to you under the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*, as well as any other existing and forthcoming emergency authorities under the *Stafford Act*, to ensure WIC families have access to nutritious food during this pandemic.¹ As supermarkets and other approved vendors may be depleted of WIC-eligible foods and formula, it is critical that state agencies and vendors are empowered to meet the needs of WIC families. While we understand that states are responsible for eligible food lists based on federal standards within the seven WIC food packages, we hope USDA will deliver clear guidance to agencies to temporarily expand approved food lists to include suitable substitutions. Though many states are bound by rebate contracts for infant formula, we also urge USDA to work with states to ensure supply and, when possible, access to similar alternatives.

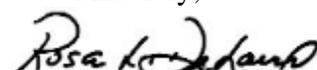
Approved food lists are an important means for agencies to control program costs, but during these extraordinary times may restrict WIC families from purchasing the only nutritious foods available simply because they lack a “WIC” label or other designation. It is critical that any changes in restrictions be clearly communicated to WIC families, vendors, and EBT processors who may be accustomed to a narrow list of brands and labels in their states and territories.

The lifesaving services and resources of WIC are more important than ever during this uncertain time. We are committed to working with you to ensure families continue to receive the assistance they need. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress



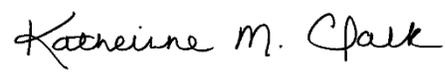
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

/s

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



Jennifer González-Colón
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress

¹ Families First Coronavirus Response Act, §2204

Harley Rouda

Harley Rouda
Member of Congress

Nydia Velázquez

Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Anthony Brown

Anthony Brown
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard

Tulsi Gabbard
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Debbie Dingell

Debbie Dingell
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Terri A. Sewell
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John B. Larson

John B. Larson
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Jan Schakowsky
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Bill Foster

Bill Foster
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Adriano Espaillat
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Mike Thompson

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Peter DeFazio

Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

/s/ Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

Conor Lamb

Conor Lamb
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

/s

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

/s

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Albio Sires

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

/s

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

/s

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

/s

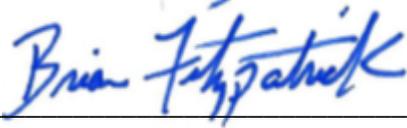
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern

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Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff

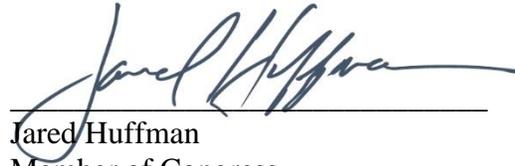
Adam B. Schiff
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