

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

June 5, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

Thank you for your efforts to ensure continued access to federal nutrition programs throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. We are writing regarding the waivers issued to state agencies for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), in accordance with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. These waivers permit WIC agencies to establish remote recertification for applicants, expand available food options through product substitutions, and remotely issue benefits either through mail, remote loading of an EBT card, or drive-through clinics. We applaud your agency's extension of these critical waivers to June 30, 2020, and additionally, request that you extend them once again to September 30, 2020, consistent with the authority granted under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

States and localities require flexibility to ensure public safety during the crisis. The decision of when and how to reopen is being made at the state and local level, with governors, mayors, and county supervisors working to determine the best way forward for each community. State and local governments and frontline providers need the certainty of knowing that necessary flexibilities will not expire before a reopening plan is put into place, an outcome that would force low-income women and children to have to choose between vital nutrition support or their family's own health and safety.

WIC, like many programs that support low-income Americans, is in a period of increased demand. In California alone, there's been more than a 10 percent increase in participation in WIC over the past two months. Those new participants will need to be certified – a process that the waivers allow to be conducted virtually or telephonically. WIC programs across the country need to know that they're going to be able to meet the additional demand for the remainder of the crisis while still maintaining safety precautions and that their existing participants won't need to put themselves at unnecessary risk to recertify their eligibility in the future.

Frontline WIC providers need time to put safety precautions in place, which includes making structural modifications to clinics to accommodate for social distancing and procuring protective equipment, which has proved increasingly difficult given widespread demand. Many state agencies are also planning phased reopening, which would require extensions of the waiver to limit initial clinic-based activities to maintain the safety of both participating families and clinic staff.

Most importantly, women and children who receive WIC benefits – particularly ones receiving benefits for the first time - need the stability of knowing that this program will be there for them whether or not they feel safe leaving their homes. This is a time of unprecedented crisis in every aspect of Americans' lives, and we need to show them that we're going to be there for them. We have the ability to provide this relief in full, not in piecemeal, and that is why we urge you to extend these waivers to September 30, 2020 – the maximum time permitted by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

We appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,



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Josh Harder  
Member of Congress



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Jenniffer González-Colón  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress

/s/

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

/s/

TJ Cox  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

/s/

Angie Craig  
Member of Congress

/s/

Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

/s/

Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

/s/

Ed Case  
Member of Congress

/s/

Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress

/s/

Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

/s/

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

/s/

Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

/s/

Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress

/s/

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

/s/

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

/s/

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

/s/

David Scott  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

/s/

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

/s/

Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

/s/

Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

/s/

Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

/s/

David Trone  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

/s/

Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress

/s/

Kendra S. Horn  
Member of Congress

/s/

Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jesús G. “Chuy” Garcia  
Member of Congress

/s/

Lauren Underwood  
Member of Congress

/s/

Susan A. Davis  
Member of Congress

/s/

Scott Peters  
Member of Congress

/s/

Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

/s/

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

/s/

Brenda L. Lawrence  
Member of Congress

/s/

Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress

/s/

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

/s/

Andy Levin  
Member of Congress

/s/

J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress

/s/

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

/s/

Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress

/s/

Mike Levin  
Member of Congress

/s/

Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

/s/

Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress

/s/

Ted Lieu  
Member of Congress

/s/

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

/s/

Deb Haaland  
Member of Congress

/s/

Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

/s/

Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress

/s/

Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress

/s/

Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

/s/

Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

/s/

Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress

/s/

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress