



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

September 18, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
1326 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressional Leadership:

We, the First Spouses and Partners of Pennsylvania, California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming have long focused our efforts on supporting and advocating for the children and families of our great country. For that reason, we thank you for your support of the child nutrition programs and urge you to work with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to further extend and fully fund these programs to guarantee that all children have access to food throughout the entire 2020-21 school year.

Since March, the authority and funding that Congress has afforded to USDA has allowed them to issue essential waivers that have allowed our school and community providers the ability to serve meals safely, effectively, and inclusively; and this has provided a level of certainty amidst one of the most uncertain times our nation has faced in modern history. We commend you for the leadership you have shown in ensuring these flexibilities, which have made a substantial difference on the health and well-being of families.

Recent Feeding America research shows that more than 54 million people, including 18 million children, may experience food insecurity this year, marking a 46 percent increase in general food insecurity rates and a 64 percent increase in child food insecurity rates compared to pre-COVID-19 statistics. Kids who are hungry are less likely to learn as much or as fast because a lack of healthy food can impair a child's ability to concentrate and perform well in school. When children are well-fed, it has long-lasting consequences for the entire country – they grow up smarter, healthier, and stronger – and that means a smarter, healthier, stronger nation.

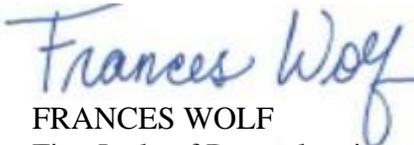
Beyond the health and safety concerns that have come with a global pandemic, we have seen economic hardship abound as millions of people, many of whom are parents and guardians, have lost their jobs or experienced a decrease in employment. This has made our school meals more important than ever. Furthermore, our school staff and volunteers have faced extraordinary administrative burdens and have worked around the clock to meet the needs of their communities.

We note that the Department has granted waivers as to other requirements, such as meal time restrictions, through June 30, 2021. Therefore, we respectfully request that Congress work with the USDA to ensure that funding is readily available to support this program throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

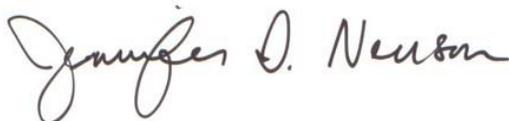
Our children are our greatest resource, and there is no more necessary action than safeguarding their access to life-sustaining meals. The continuation of these waivers will help alleviate confusion for families, eliminate excessive administrative burdens placed on staff, and, ultimately, ensure that all children have enough to eat.

On behalf of the vulnerable children and families of the states we represent, we thank you for your dedication and we humbly ask for your partnership in making these requests to ensure that we, as a nation, can continue to feed the young people of America.

Sincerely,



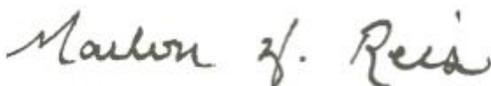
FRANCES WOLF
First Lady of Pennsylvania



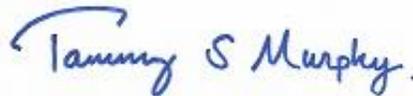
JENNIFER SIEBEL NEWSOM
First Partner of California



LISA BULLOCK
First Lady of Montana



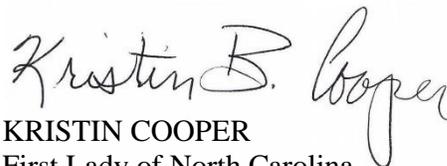
MARLON REIS
First Gentleman of Colorado



TAMMY SNYDER MURPHY
First Lady of New Jersey



TRACEY QUILLEN CARNEY
First Lady of Delaware



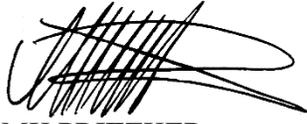
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First Gentleman of Rhode Island



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First Lady of Illinois



PAMELA NORTHAM
First Lady of Virginia



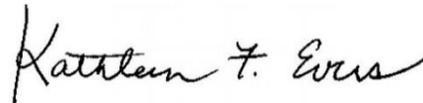
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First Gentleman of Kansas



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First Lady of Kentucky



KATHY EVERS
First Lady of Wisconsin



LAUREN BAKER
First Lady of Massachusetts



JENNIE GORDON
First Lady of Wyoming



GWEN WALZ
First Lady of Minnesota

CC: Senator Pat Roberts
Senator Debbie Stabenow
Representative Bobby Scott
Representative Virginia Foxx
Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation