

May 12, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Temporarily Expand SNAP in the Next Federal COVID-19 Relief Package to Lift Up Vulnerable Families and Support Local Economies

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McConnell, Schumer, and McCarthy:

We, the undersigned mayors representing cities across the nation, appreciate your work on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to help workers, employers, older Americans, and children, but much more needs to be done to ensure that our residents can weather this crisis. During this time of soaring unemployment, financial insecurity, and growing hunger, we urge Congress to temporarily increase SNAP benefit levels in the next federal COVID-19 relief package.

America's cities are on the front line of responding to unprecedented disruption to local economies triggered by COVID-19. As mayors, we need every option available to fight hunger and stimulate the economy in our cities. SNAP is a proven solution to both challenges. By providing families with a grocery benefit they can use to purchase food directly, SNAP is a safe, effective way to ensure that low-income children and their families can get the food they need during this unprecedented crisis.

While the FFCRA provided USDA with authority to increase emergency SNAP allotments for existing SNAP households to the maximum benefit, the most vulnerable families—roughly 12 million people, including 5 million children—received no additional nutrition assistance because their household already received the maximum SNAP benefit. **Given the extraordinary increase in need during this public health crisis, we urge you to temporarily expand SNAP by increasing the benefit available to all households by 15% and increasing the minimum benefit from \$16 to \$30 in the next federal relief package.** This increase is needed to offset the significant loss in income and soaring unemployment resulting from COVID-19-related closures and disruptions.

Strengthening SNAP will not only feed struggling families, it will boost the economy. Economists estimate that every SNAP dollar that households redeem expands the economy by approximately \$1.50 by enabling low-income households to buy other essential items, like diapers and medication, and provides revenue directly to local businesses, thus helping maintain jobs in our cities. For example, USDA's Economic Research Service estimates that every \$1 billion invested in SNAP supports 13,600 jobs. As the federal government continues to respond COVID-19, we urge you to quickly act to provide relief to low-income families by temporarily increasing the SNAP benefit amount.

Congress has taken important steps to help communities navigate this challenging time, but more is required. Given the unprecedented nature of this crisis, struggling families and their children need SNAP benefits more than ever before. Congress should act now to ensure that families are able to put food on the table in the coming months as we eventually emerge from this crisis.

Sincerely,

Mayor Levar Stoney
Richmond, VA

Mayor Betsy Price
Fort Worth, TX

Mayor John Giles
Mesa, AZ

Mayor Kate Gallego
Phoenix, AZ

Mayor Regina Romero
Tucson, AZ

Mayor Robert Garcia
Long Beach, CA

Mayor Eric Garcetti
Los Angeles, CA

Mayor Darrell Steinberg
Sacramento, CA

Mayor London Breed
San Francisco, CA

Mayor Patrick J. Furey
Torrance, CA

Mayor Michael B. Hancock
Denver, CO

Mayor Luke Bronin
Hartford, CT

Mayor Neil M. O'Leary
Waterbury, CT

Mayor Muriel Bowser
Washington, DC

Mayor Lauren McLean
Boise, ID

Mayor Buddy Dyer
Orlando, FL

Mayor Rick Kriseman
St. Petersburg, FL

Mayor Jane Castor
Tampa, FL

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot
Chicago, IL

Mayor Sharon Weston Broome
Baton Rouge, LA

Mayor Martin J. Walsh
Boston, MA

Mayor Kate Snyder
Portland, ME

Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young
Baltimore, MD

Mayor Mike Duggan
Detroit, MI

Mayor Melvin Carter
St. Paul, MN

Mayor Lyda Krewson
St. Louis, MO

Mayor Tim Keller
Albuquerque, NM

Mayor John Cranley
Cincinnati, OH

Mayor Andy Ginther
Columbus, OH

Mayor Nan Whaley
Dayton, OH

Mayor Jim Kenney
Philadelphia, PA

Mayor Bill Peduto
Pittsburgh, PA

Mayor Jorge Elorza
Providence, RI

Mayor Steve Adler
Austin, TX

Mayor Curtistene S. McCowan
DeSoto, TX

Mayor Erin Mendenhall
Salt Lake City, UT

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan
Seattle, WA

Mayor Victoria Woodards
Tacoma, WA

Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway
Madison, WI

Mayor Tom Barrett
Milwaukee, WI