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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6000
202-224-2035

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The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

As local school districts implement plans for the 2020-2021 school year, we write to encourage you to continue to provide the flexibilities needed to enable school food authorities and other (non-school) sponsor organizations to continue to offer meals through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA'S) child nutrition programs.

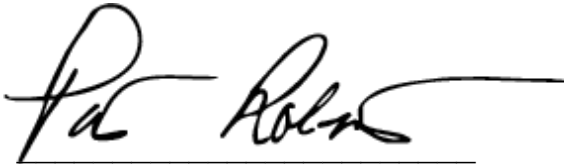
We appreciate USDA's use of child nutrition program waiver authority, flexibility provided, and work with state agencies, schools and non-school sponsoring organizations to provide meals through various child nutrition programs when schools were unexpectedly closed in the spring. We also applaud the extension of these flexibilities through the summer months.

As the school year begins, the challenges brought on by the COVID emergency persist. We encourage continued use of the child nutrition program waiver authority ably used thus far to assist school food authorities and non-school sponsoring organizations who work collaboratively to provide children meals while schools explore various and blended models of in-person and virtual classroom sessions. USDA's efforts to provide regulatory flexibility for 2020-2021 school meal programs and the Child and Adult Care Food Program regarding meal patterns, meal-times, non-congregate feeding, parent and guardian meal pick-up, and "offer vs. serve" requirements are examples of using this authority to reassure families and schools in recent weeks.

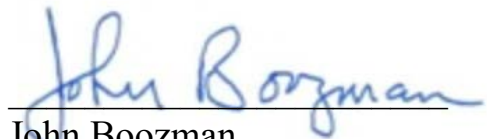
During this COVID emergency, we ask USDA to utilize program flexibilities, grants or reimbursements that assist school food authorities with procuring, preparing, and serving meals in a manner consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 school re-opening guidelines and that support non-school sponsors providing meals to children on remote-learning days or when in-classroom learning is unavailable.

Many schools and families are currently determining their plans for the upcoming school year, including plans for school meals. We ask you and the USDA team to continue utilizing child nutrition program waivers that Congress provided in a manner consistent with existing authorities and program objectives.

Sincerely,



Pat Roberts
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



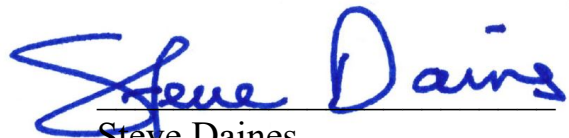
Bill Cassidy, M.D.
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United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



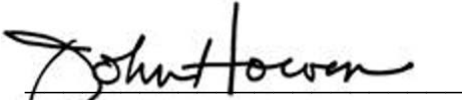
Senator Deb Fischer
United States Senator



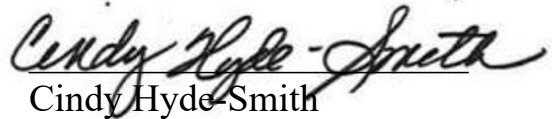
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Charles Grassley
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



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