

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2016

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Farr
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Farr:

As you begin consideration of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies bill, we respectfully request funding in the amount of \$50 million for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children demonstration project. This funding is needed to expand this program's proven ability to improve food security and nutrition for low-income children to states that do not currently benefit from its success.

During the school year, millions of low-income children have access to nutritious food through free and reduced-price meals. However, only one in six of these eligible children have access to free and reduced-price meals in the summer, when school is out of session. Lack of transportation, limited number of food sites and resources, and restricted site hours, are some of the many barriers that prevent children from benefiting from summer meals programs. Our inability to adequately serve more low-income children who are at a higher risk of food insecurity has detriment affects the health and development of our most vulnerable students.

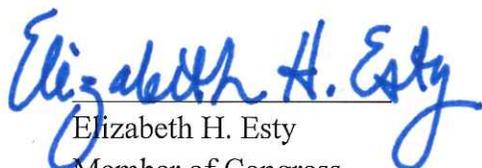
To overcome some of the barriers to access, the USDA created the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC) demonstration project to study the use of Electronic Benefits Transfer debit cards in providing food assistance to eligible children in low-income households during the summer months. Each family receives an EBT card with approximately \$60 per eligible child per month, redeemable at Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) authorized retailers.

Since its inception in 2011, this pilot program has substantially reduced childhood hunger, decreasing very high food insecurity among children by a third. The SEBTC demonstration project has also improved childhood nutrition - enabling children to eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. This program is successful at alleviating child hunger in the summer, reaching 30-75% of eligible children, far higher than the 16-17% reached by traditional summer meals programs.

The SEBTC demonstration project is currently at work in Connecticut, Delaware, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Washington, Cherokee Nation, and Chickasaw Nation. This funding for FY2017 will allow USDA to continue this program's success and expand it to additional states. This will help more states reach low-income children who lack access to the existing summer meals program, and will better determine if SEBTC can address childhood hunger during summer months throughout more of the country.

We must do more to end child food insecurity. We urge you to support robust funding for the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children pilot program, a program that is proven to improve child nutrition and reduced childhood hunger.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



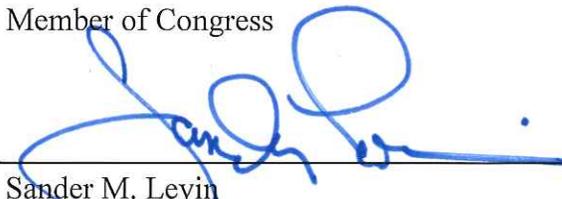
James A. Himes
Member of Congress



John Conyers
Member of Congress



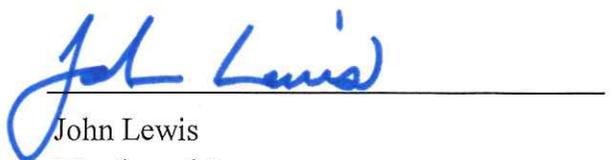
Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



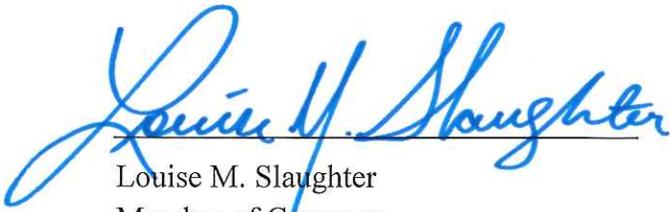
Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



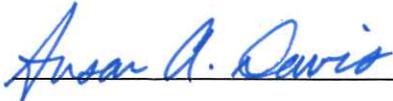
John Lewis
Member of Congress



Louise M. Slaughter
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Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Susan Davis
Member of Congress



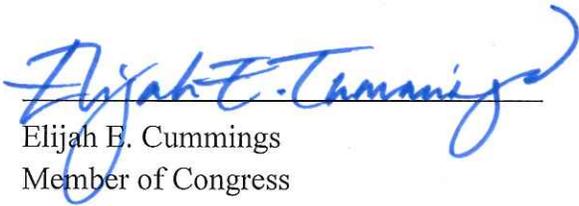
Chris Van Hollen
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Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
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Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress



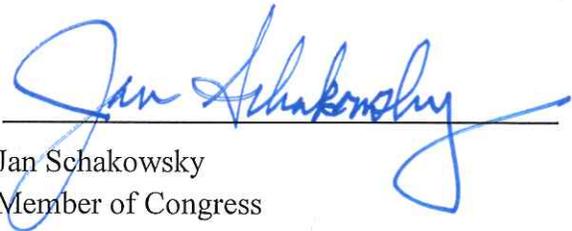
Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



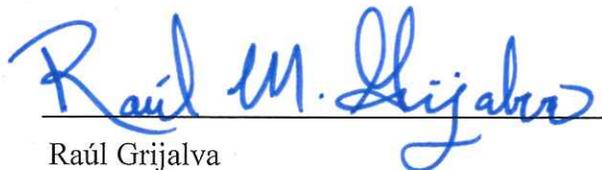
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



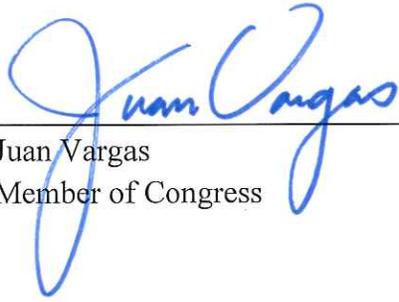
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



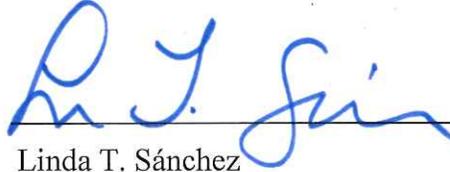
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



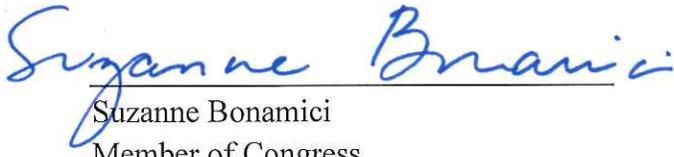
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Linda T. Sánchez
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Suzanne Bonamici
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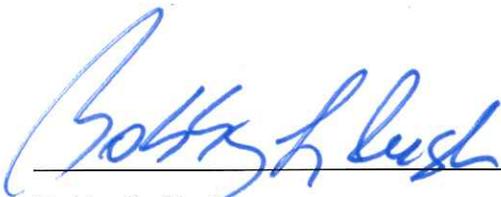
Chaka Fattah
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



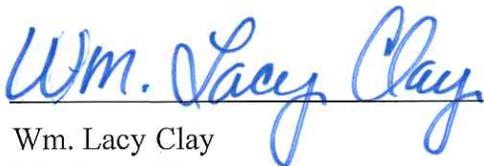
Mark Takano
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Wm. Lacy Clay
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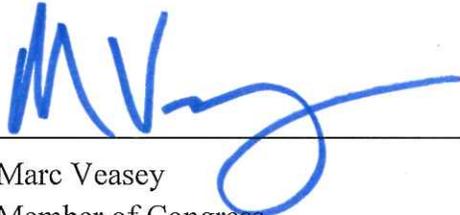
David Scott
Member of Congress



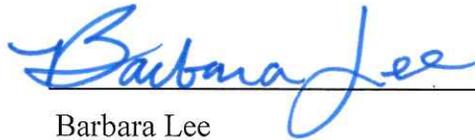
Adam B. Schiff
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Matt Cartwright
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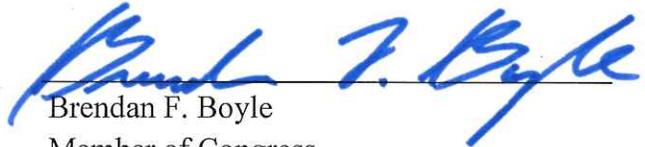
Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



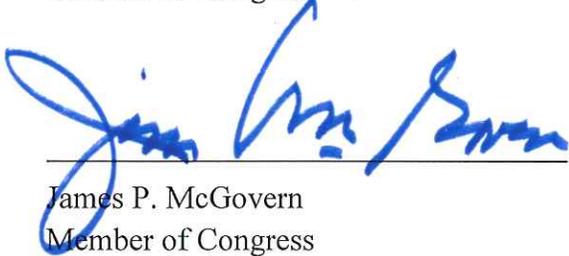
Barbara Lee
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Mark DeSaulnier
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Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



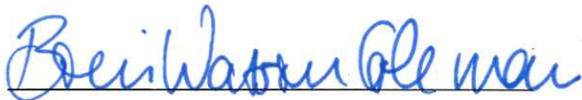
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



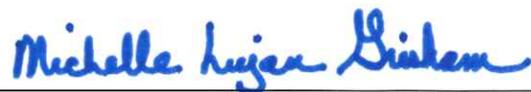
Adam Smith
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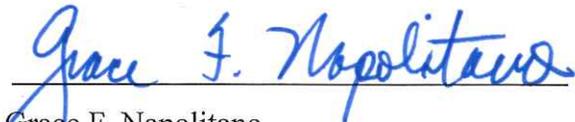
Sean Patrick Maloney
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



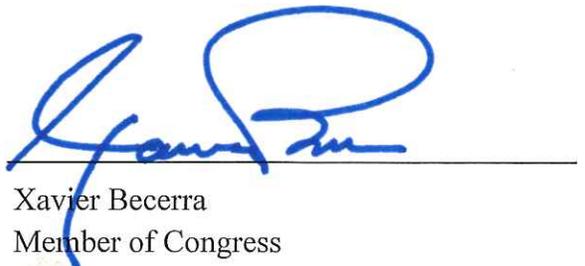
Earl Blumenauer
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Grace F. Napolitano
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Lloyd Doggett
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Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress



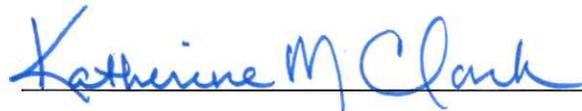
John K. Delaney
Member of Congress



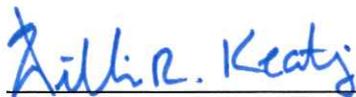
Pete Aguilar
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Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



William Keating
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



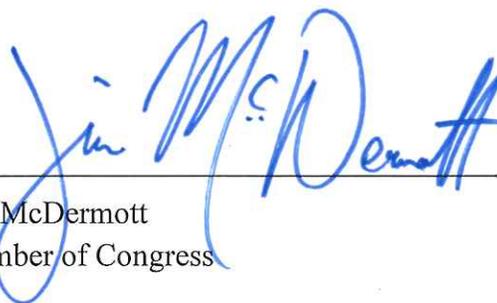
Karen Bass
Member of Congress



Scott Peters
Member of Congress



Gene Green
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress