

September 20, 2021

Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Appropriations

Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr.  
Chairman  
House Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies

Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chairwoman  
Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies

Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations

Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Honorable Jeff Fortenberry  
Ranking Member  
House Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies

Honorable John Hoeven  
Ranking Member  
Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Fortenberry, Chairwoman Baldwin, Ranking Member Hoeven,

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress gave the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) the authority to grant nationwide child nutrition waivers, allowing school nutrition programs and nonprofit organizations to adapt as necessary to changes such as school closures and virtual learning. This authority was extended through the [Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act](#). Without these waivers, the child nutrition programs would not have been able to adequately respond to the fallout from COVID-19. These programs administered by USDA have been a backbone of our country's pandemic response to childhood hunger.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over. Families continue to need support, and school nutrition departments and community sponsors are struggling to operate under the unique circumstances created by the pandemic. Contrary to where many people thought and hoped we would be at this point in the pandemic, COVID-19 continues to be a threat and the Delta variant is more contagious than previous strains and causing an increase in pediatric cases. It is unclear when schools and community organizations will be able to return to normal operations, particularly in light of the number of students quarantining in response to outbreaks, the expected spike in the winter months and future variants of COVID-19 that may develop.

**The authority to provide a nationwide waiver, even if it increases program costs, is set to expire on September 30, 2021. We, the undersigned organizations, ask Congress to extend USDA’s nationwide waiver authority to September 30, 2022 to ensure they have the flexibility needed to respond to the pandemic and ensure that the federal child nutrition programs continue to operate and provide healthy snacks and meals to the students who need them.**

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Afterschool Alliance  
American Commodity Distribution Association  
American Heart Association  
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)  
Boys & Girls Clubs of America  
Bread for the World  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Children’s Defense Fund  
Feeding America  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
FoodCorps  
Food Research & Action Center  
MomsRising  
National Education Association  
National Farm to School Network  
National PTA  
National Recreation and Park Association  
School Nutrition Association  
Urban School Food Alliance  
YMCA of the USA