



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

July 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Sanford Bishop
Chairman
House Appropriations Agriculture-
FDA Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Chairman Bishop:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Financial Security and Poverty Taskforce and Education Taskforce write in support of bill and report language which would strengthen the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the recently approved Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Agriculture-Rural Development-FDA Funding Bill. CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

We strongly support the Committee's inclusion of both bill and report language in the FY 21 Agriculture-Rural Development-FDA Funding Bill which would block the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents rule (ABAWD) and the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) rule. Additionally, we also support the corresponding bill report language which encourages USDA to withdraw the Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility rule (BBCE). We thank you for including this language and urge you include it in the final appropriations package. These three rules threaten access to SNAP for people with disabilities and for students with disabilities who are automatically eligible and directly certified for free school meals through participation in SNAP. CCD has previously opposed these rules as they would make it more difficult for people with disabilities to access needed nutrition assistance.¹

¹ CCD Comments on Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents Proposed Rule (Apr. 2, 2019), CCD Comments on Categorical Eligibility Proposed Rule (Sept. 23, 2019), CCD Comments on Standardization of State Heating and Cooling Standard Utility Allowances Proposed Rule (Dec. 2, 2019).

As COVID-19 cases continue to surge in many parts of the country coupled with a bleak economic forecast for the foreseeable future, preserving and expanding access to nutrition assistance is critical during these unprecedented and unpredictable times. It is unconscionable that during a global pandemic that has resulted in economic uncertainty not seen since the Great Recession, USDA elected to proceed with the implementation of its damaging regulatory agenda. As recently as the third week in June, almost 18 percent of children in the US did not have sufficient food² and food bank leaders have expressed grave concerns about a food insecurity crisis as the economy continues to recover.³ SNAP provides needed food assistance to millions of adults and children with disabilities and it is absolutely critical that access to SNAP be preserved and that desperately needed additional federal resources are provided in both FY 21 appropriations bills and the next COVID-19 relief package.

Again, we applaud the Committee for including this important language in the FY 21 Agriculture-Rural Development-FDA Funding Bill and urge you to include this language in any final appropriations package. As the pandemic runs its course, both adults and children with disabilities will need continued access to much needed food assistance. We look forward to working with Congress on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact Cyrus Huncharek (cyrus.huncharek@ndrn.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

American Foundation for the Blind
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Society of America
Brain Injury Association of America
Center for Public Representation
Council for Learning Disabilities
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)
Easterseals
Epilepsy Foundation
The Jewish Federations of North America
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment
(National PLACE)
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC)
RespectAbility

² Bauer, L. (2020, July 9). About 14 million children in the US are not getting enough to eat. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/07/09/about-14-million-children-in-the-us-are-not-getting-enough-to-eat/?preview_id=906357

³ 'There's only so much we can do': Food banks plead for help. (2020, June 8). Retrieved from <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/06/08/food-banks-plead-for-help-306492>

School Social Work Association of America
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States

CC: House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration and Related Agencies