



February 4, 2022

Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations

Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby,

We are members of the [Mayors Alliance to End Childhood Hunger](#), a nonpartisan coalition representing more than 65 mayors across the nation working in partnership with Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign to ensure that every child has the healthy food they need to thrive. We appreciate Congress' ongoing efforts to help the millions of children who rely on federal child nutrition programs as a daily source of nutrition. At the start of the pandemic, Congress provided the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with the authority to issue nationwide child nutrition waivers to ensure that children would continue to have access to healthy meals despite COVID-19 related disruptions and safety precautions.

With the pandemic continuing, we urge Congress to extend USDA's waiver authority through the 2022-2023 school year, giving USDA the authority to provide community organizations and school nutrition providers with the critical flexibilities needed to respond to public health requirements and supply chain disruptions. This is necessary to ensure that the federal child nutrition programs continue to operate and provide healthy meals and snacks for vulnerable children.

Our cities are on the frontline of responding to challenges in our communities, and as mayors, we need every option available to fight childhood hunger. Waivers for child nutrition program requirements have allowed schools, community partners, and other organizations in our cities to operate with the flexibility to meet the growing need while protecting the health and safety of kids during the pandemic. However, these critical waivers are currently set to expire at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, and the USDA does not have the authority to issue or extend waivers beyond that point unless Congress acts. The uncertainty about the extension of USDA's waiver authority is a significant barrier to schools and community organizations trying to make plans to feed children this summer and next school year since the requirements affect budgets, staffing, and vendors. Furthermore, the expiration of USDA's waiver authority at the end of the 2021-2022 school year further limits summer meal programs by not operating under the same program rules across the entire summer. With deadlines looming, especially for summer operations, organizations must have the reassurance they need that they will be able to safely run programs despite ongoing challenges. This hits our communities particularly hard because summer is the hungriest time for children. Summer hunger should not be intensified because meal programs lack the flexibility they need to reach kids.





The suite of child nutrition waivers has given community organizations and school nutrition providers critical flexibilities that have:

- Supported families who needed to pick up multiple meals at a time in one location as they returned to work or faced transportation challenges.
- Allowed for social distancing protocols through grab-and-go meal distribution or delivery.
- Ensured that children who need meals are getting nutritious food as families continue to struggle economically through the pandemic.
- Helped school nutrition providers support a return to "normal" in-person learning with the flexibility to implement safety precautions and overcome supply chain and labor disruptions

Child nutrition programs play a critical role in helping kids learn, stay healthy, and thrive.

Again, we urge Congress to act now by extending USDA's waiver authority so that schools and community organizations have ample time to ensure that no child struggles to find their next meal.

Sincerely,

Levar Stoney
Chair, Mayors Alliance
Mayor of Richmond, VA

John Giles
Vice Chair, Mayors Alliance
Mayor of Mesa, AZ

Timothy L. Ragland
Mayor of Talladega, AL

Randall Woodfin
Mayor of Birmingham, AL

Hillrey Adams
Mayor of Mountain Home, AR

Lionel Jordan
Mayor of Fayetteville, AR

Regina Romero
Mayor of Tucson, AZ

London Breed
Mayor of San Francisco, CA

Martha Guerrero
Mayor of West Sacramento, CA

Darrell Steinberg
Mayor of Sacramento, CA

Michael B. Hancock
Mayor of Denver, CO

Luke Bronin
Mayor of Hartford, CT

Muriel Bowser
Mayor of Washington, DC

John E. Dailey
Mayor of Tallahassee, FL

Lori Lightfoot
Mayor of Chicago, IL

Sharon Weston Broome
Mayor of Baton Rouge, LA

Kim Driscoll
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Jake Day
Mayor of Salisbury MD

Michael Foley
Mayor of Westbrook, ME

Andy Schor
Mayor of Lansing, MI

Chokwe A. Lumumba
Mayor of Jackson, MS

Pam Hemminger
Mayor of Chapel Hill, NC

Elaine O'Neal
Mayor of Durham, NC



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Mayor of Rocky Mount, NC

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Sylvester Turner
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Barbara Tolbert
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