

December 4, 2023

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition  
& Forestry  
328-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition  
& Forestry  
328-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable G.T. Thompson  
Chairman  
House Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Scott  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Agriculture  
1010 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Scott:

We are writing to raise the importance of home delivery as a tool to increase access and participation in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and ask you to include H.R. 4745, the *Delivering for Rural Seniors Act*, in the Farm Bill.

CSFP is a crucial food assistance program that leverages the federal government's buying power to efficiently supply USDA commodity foods to older adults with low income via a monthly food box. While the program serves over 650,000 Americans, according to the USDA, more than 100,000 eligible individuals did not participate in CSFP last year, likely due in part to a lack of transportation and/or access to local food banks or other nutrition programs that address senior hunger and nutrition in their community.

Whether because of mobility issues or transportation challenges, travel represents a significant obstacle for many older adults with low income – especially those who are homebound – to participate in CSFP. Seniors in rural communities face even greater difficulties participating in the program as the distances to their closest food bank, pantry, or distribution location are generally much farther and transportation options are fewer. Home delivery of senior food boxes takes barriers like transportation and mobility out of the equation by ensuring that food travels to those in need – not the other way around.

Expanding access to CSFP via home delivery has already yielded results. States like Arizona, Pennsylvania, and Texas – where local food banks leveraged senior food box delivery during the

pandemic – have seen significant participation rate increases due to these innovative solutions. However, many CSFP-eligible seniors who could benefit from home delivery do not have this option because existing resources are already being expended to support other critical program operations.

The *Delivering for Rural Seniors Act* gives Congress and USDA an opportunity to support and quantitatively assess the impact of home delivery on the CSFP participation rates. The bill would establish a three-year pilot grant program to support home delivery of senior food boxes from food banks and other community organizations. Over three years, this pilot has the potential to expand access to nutritious food for thousands of seniors during a time when households are still facing economic pressure due to inflation and other factors.

During the pilot, organizations that receive grant funding will be required to submit annual reports detailing their activities, including the quantity of commodities and average cost of delivery, as well as an assessment of the effectiveness of home delivery. Additionally, grant funds will be prioritized for organizations that serve rural communities to help bridge the access inequities that many rural seniors face.

Home delivery has proven to be a powerful tool in breaking down barriers to food access for older Americans. The Farm Bill presents a unique opportunity to further demonstrate the efficacy of delivery while increasing participation in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. We kindly ask for your support for the inclusion of the *Delivering for Rural Seniors Act* in the Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

Alliance to End Hunger  
Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank  
Baraga-Houghton-Keweenaw Community Action  
Bread For the City  
Bucks County Opportunity Council  
C.H.O.I.C.E.S. (The Center Helping Obesity In Children End Successfully Inc.)  
Coalition for Food and Health Equity  
Community Action Agency South Central Michigan  
Community Action of Allegan County  
Community Action Partnership of Kern  
Community Food Share  
Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County  
Community Partnership Inc.  
Delhi Center

Dickinson Iron Community Services Agency  
DoorDash, Inc.  
El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank  
Feeding America  
Feeding Colorado  
Food Bank Council of Michigan  
Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina  
Food Bank of Delaware  
Food Bank of the Albemarle  
Food Bank of the Rockies  
Food For All DC  
Food Gatherers  
Foodbank of Santa Barbara County  
Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action Agency  
Harry Chapin Food Bank  
Have a Gay Day, Inc.  
Hispanic Federation  
Houston Food Bank  
Hunger Task Force  
Hunger-Free PA  
Judge Me Now Edu Inc  
Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes  
Kent County Community Action  
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOUNDATION  
Masterkey Ministries of Grayson County  
Meals on Wheels America  
MidMichigan Community Action Agency  
National Commodity Supplemental Food Program Association  
National Urban League  
North Texas Food Bank  
Northern Illinois Food Bank  
OCCAA - Ottawa County Community Action Agency  
Pisgah Pantry Outreach  
San Francisco-Marin Food Bank  
Second Harvest Heartland  
Second Harvest of the Big Bend  
Share Food Program Inc.  
St. Mary's Food Bank  
Tarrant Area Food Bank

The Atlanta Community Food Bank  
The FISH of Roseburg Food Pantry  
The Foodbank Inc.  
The Just One Project  
Three Square Food Bank  
UnidosUS  
Vermont Foodbank  
Westmoreland County Food Bank, Inc.