

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 6, 2011

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Summer vacation is rapidly approaching for children across America. While some children are looking forward to a summer full of fun, 20.5 million others who depend on free and reduced meals during the school year are wondering if they will have enough to eat. 14 million children and their families rely on the nation's food banks to provide meals all year round, and especially during the summer months. According to a 2010 report by Feeding America, one in eight Americans – a staggering increase of 46 percent since 2006 – are now receiving emergency food assistance through the organization's nationwide network of food banks.

This year, food banks are facing the prospect of bare shelves. Without immediate Federal support to provide additional food through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), our nation's food banks will likely fall short in meeting food demands – not only throughout the summer months but also later in the year and during the holiday season. That is why we respectfully request that you use your administrative authorities to direct existing funding to purchase TEFAP commodities in FY2011.

Despite generous support from a wide variety of private donors, food banks cannot meet the need in their communities without TEFAP commodities. In FY2010, TEFAP provided approximately \$655 million worth of healthy and nutritious foods. The figure includes commodity purchases mandated by the 2008 Farm Bill and bonus commodity purchases appropriated in FY2010.

Currently, the need for emergency food assistance is at unprecedented levels at the same time that the agricultural markets are very strong. As a result, there are scant supplies of surplus agricultural products - products that USDA traditionally buys and distributes as bonus TEFAP commodities. If USDA makes no additional bonus purchases in FY2011, TEFAP spending levels will drop by approximately \$295 million to a level of approximately \$360 million – a reduction of 45 percent between FY2010 and FY2011.

Even though USDA is currently delivering TEFAP commodities to food banks, bonus commodities have not been purchased since last fall. With an estimated lag time for product

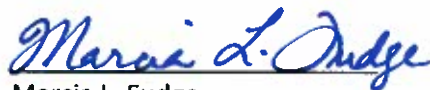
delivery between three to six months, we expect emergency feeding organizations will experience a significant decline in TEFAP products within the next month - just as schools are letting out for the summer.

Without additional purchases, too many of the nation's food banks will face the prospect of seriously depleted food stocks in the coming months. We must do what is necessary to ensure that our constituents who are in need have adequate access to food to nourish themselves and their families.

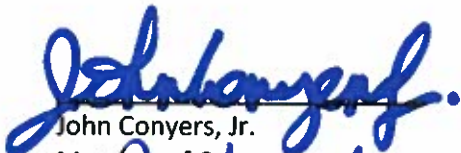
As our nation continues on the path to economic recovery, food banks and the struggling families, seniors, and children they serve, desperately need your immediate help this summer. In light of the urgent circumstances they face, we respectfully urge you to use your administrative authorities to direct existing funding to increase the availability of TEFAP commodities purchased in FY2011.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request and for your ongoing support and dedication to efforts to help end hunger in America.

Sincerely,



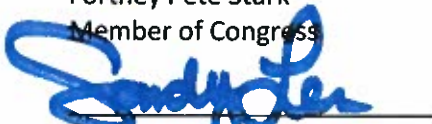
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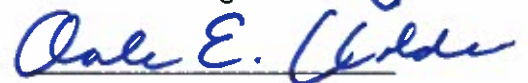
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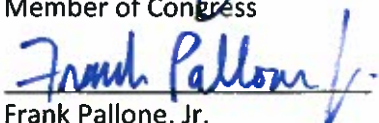
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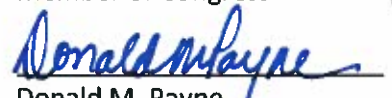
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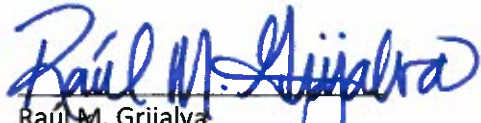
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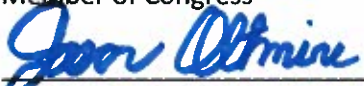
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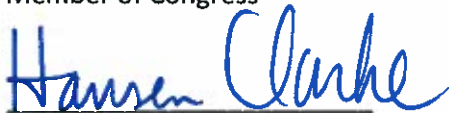
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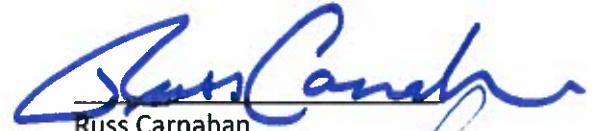
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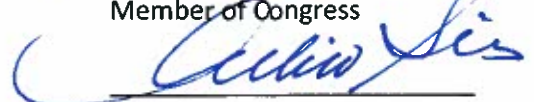
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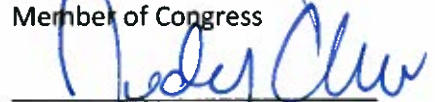
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