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Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

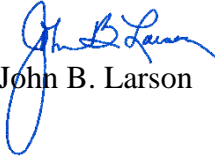
I am requesting funding for La Bodeguita De La Gente in fiscal year 2022. The entity to receive funding for this project is Connecticut Food Bank, located at 450 Woodland Ave. Bloomfield, CT 06002.

The funding would be used to allow Connecticut Food Bank to expand La Bodeguita De La Gente's scope to serve more households and coordinate with other local organizations to provide wrap-around services. Without the requested funding they will not be able to continue their work at the level needed within this community, leaving the more than 400 households each week with a devastating gap in services. There is currently no one else meeting the needs of the vulnerable population in this neighborhood as effectively as they are. They have participated in the distribution of Farmers to Families Food Boxes during the pandemic and act as a TEFAP distribution site in compliance with federal regulations. They provide diapers, clothing, and books through a partnership with the Hartford Public Library during the pandemic. With this funding La Bodeguita could continue and expand their work to offer more fresh produce, shortened wait times and additional wrap around services like SNAP outreach, access to health care and legal services.

Motivated by her own experience as a single mother and refugee from Peru, Xiomy began distributing food and supplies out of her house to neighbors whom she knew were struggling. She speaks candidly about the challenges she faced immigrating to escape violence and the challenges she faced once she arrived. It is her empathy and understanding of the experiences this vulnerable population faces that has created this special program. Barriers like language, transportation, and immigration status prevented many in her community from seeking the help they needed and in many cases were entitled to. The first distributions out of Xiomy and her partner Ingmar's home supported less than 10 families but within a few months the need increased significantly. They relocated to the basement of a mattress store in the vibrant and diverse Parkville neighborhood of Hartford and less than a year later La Bodeguita De La Gente, the People's Little Market, is serving more than 400 households a week.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,



John B. Larson