

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 27, 2026

Brooke Rollins
Secretary
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins,

We write regarding the growing strain that high food costs and recent changes to federal nutrition programs are placing on older Americans and to demand answers regarding the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) efforts to protect seniors' access to affordable, nutritious food.

At a time when Americans continue to face elevated grocery costs, Washington Republicans enacted the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) (P.L. 119-21), which the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates will reduce federal SNAP spending by approximately \$187 billion through 2034.¹ The law expanded SNAP's three-month time limit and associated work requirements to certain adults ages 55 through 64, restricted states' ability to obtain geographic waivers from those requirements, and made additional changes to state cost-sharing requirements expected to reduce SNAP participation and benefits.² These cuts come as the same law provides substantial tax benefits that will help disproportionately benefit the rich,³ with CBO finding that the law will decrease resources available to households towards the bottom of the income distribution while increasing resources for households toward the top. Rather than protect older and low-income Americans from rising costs, you and the Trump administration continue to pursue policies that threaten to make it harder for them to afford basic necessities.

The population of Americans 60 years old and older in the U.S. is growing and changing rapidly.⁴ Older Americans are living longer with less money as inflation, housing, food, and

¹ Congressional Budget Office. *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2026-2036* (February 2026), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/62105>

² Gina Plata-Nino. *The Urgent Need to Restore the SNAP Insufficient-Jobs Waiver*, Food Research and Action Center (Sept. 10, 2026), <https://frac.org/blog/the-urgent-need-to-restore-the-snap-insufficient-jobs-waiver>

³ Brendan Duke. *Republican Megabill Trades Essential Support to Low-Income People for Skewed Tax Cuts* | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (Feb. 11, 2026), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/republican-megabill-trades-essential-support-to-low-income-people-for-skewed>

⁴ United States Census Bureau. *Global Older Adult Population Projected to Nearly Double by 2060*. (August 31, 2026). <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2026/older-adult-population-projections.html>

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health care costs increase.⁵ Many seniors rely heavily on fixed or limited incomes from Social Security, retirement savings, and pensions, leaving them particularly vulnerable as the cost of living continues to rise. Yet, instead of prioritizing solutions to the affordability crisis squeezing older Americans, President Trump refused to sign the bipartisan *21st Century ROAD to Housing Act*, dismissing the legislation as a “big yawn,” and “of minor importance.”⁶ At the same time, Washington Republicans’ enacted OBBBA, making sweeping changes to Medicaid and SNAP that will reduce federal spending and participation in programs millions of Americans rely on. Together, these policy choices threaten to deepen the financial strain facing seniors and force more older Americans to make impossible choices between putting food on the table, keeping a roof over their heads, paying their utility bills, and affording the health care and prescription drugs they need.

Over 90 percent of adults 65 and older have at least one chronic health condition and nearly 80 percent reported having two or more.⁷ However, in 2025, nearly 1 in 4 adults reported difficulty affording adequate food.⁸ People with low food security lack dietary quality and variety, which may further exacerbate chronic health conditions in seniors. Research shows that access and using SNAP benefits is associated with fewer inpatient admissions and lower health-care costs for older adults.⁹ More than half of low-income older adults aged 55-64 year olds who will be subjected to the new SNAP work requirements reported a health barrier to work.¹⁰ Even further, adults in this age range are likely to face age-related employment discrimination, resulting in less likelihood to be hired and thus, an increased risk of losing SNAP. Already, 59 percent of adults aged 50 and older who were eligible for SNAP did not participate in the program in part due to existing administrative burdens.¹¹ These cuts do not exist in a vacuum – they threaten a population for whom access to nutritious food can be a matter of health and survival. These cuts also indicate a greater attack on all food assistant programs for aging Americans and seniors.

⁵ Juliana Kaplan and Noah Sheidlower. *Older Americans are sliding into poverty.* Business Insider (September 19, 2026). <https://www.businessinsider.com/older-american-poverty-rises-healthcare-costs-social-security-2026-9>

⁶ Stephan Bisaha. *Largest housing affordability bill in decades becomes law without Trump's signature*, NPR (Jul. 11, 2026), <https://www.npr.org/2026/07/10/nx-s1-5885027/housing-bill-without-trump-signature>

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/chronic-disease/about/index.html>

⁸ Michael Karpman, Elaine Waxman, Poonam Gupta, Dulce Gonzalez, Noah Kennedy. *Food Insecurity Remained High in 2025, As Safety Net Cuts Loom*, Urban Institute (Mar. 18, 2026), <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/food-insecurity-remained-high-2025-safety-net-cuts-loom>

⁹ Steve Carloson and Joseph Llobera. *SNAP Is Linked With Improved Health Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (Dec. 14, 2022). <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-is-linked-with-improved-health-outcomes-and-lower-health-care-costs>

¹⁰ Katie Bergh, Catlin Nchako and Luis Nuñez. *Worsening SNAP's Harsh Work Requirement Would Take Food Assistance Away From Millions of Low-Income People* | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (Apr. 30, 2025), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/worsening-snaps-harsh-work-requirement-would-take-food-assistance-away>

¹¹ Olivia Dean. *16 Million Eligible Adults Ages 50-plus Are Not Enrolled in SNAP*, AARP (Mar. 28, 2025), <https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/health/food-insecurity/16-million-eligible-adults-not-enrolled-snap/>

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Earlier this year, President Trump released his Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget and called for the Commodity Supplemental Food program (CSFP) - the most extensive hunger-relief federal program for seniors and services to nearly 700,000 low-income seniors across the nation – to be eliminated. The Administration justified the elimination of this crucial program by focusing “on supporting seniors through the SNAP program”¹² as they passed a law to make SNAP more inaccessible for seniors. Congress has been responsible for keeping the CSFP fully funded and maintained while the Administration continues to threaten this critical federal food assistance program. Even so, as Americans – particularly seniors – struggle to put food on the table, you have failed to meet the urgency of this affordability crisis, even as the Department you lead reports that food prices have climbed another 3 percent in the past year.¹³

The Administration’s record provides little reassurance. During the 2025 government shutdown, there was a lapse in funding November 2025 SNAP benefits. SNAP benefits were threatened, and litigation over the Administration’s use of available federal funds left states and beneficiaries facing uncertainty over whether and when full benefits would be provided. Older Americans should never be forced to wonder whether the federal nutrition assistance on which they rely will arrive because of political or administration decisions coming from the Trump Administration.

USDA has a responsibility to administer the nation’s nutrition programs effectively and to ensure eligible Americans can access the assistance Congress has authorized. Given the Department’s responsibility for SNAP and the CSFP, we request the following responses by November 6, 2026:

- 1) How many SNAP participants ages 55 through 64 have lost benefits, had their benefits reduced, or had benefits suspended since implementation of the expanded three-month time limit and work-related requirements enacted in P.L. 119-21? Please provide this information by state, age, and reason for benefit termination, suspension, or reduction.
 - a) Additionally, what plans does USDA have to evaluate outcomes for the 55-64 year olds who are newly subjected to the time limit? Please provide the number of individuals who were granted exemptions, the number of individuals who met the requirement through various pathways (employment, unpaid, and in-kind work, etc.), and the number of individuals who were cut off after three months.
- 2) Please provide full and comprehensive data in the last 12 months regarding older Americans’ access to SNAP and the CSFP, including participation and benefit levels by state. What policy actions are you and USDA taking to continue supporting critical food assistance programs, including the CSFP?

¹²U.S. Department of Agriculture, *2027 USDA Explanatory Notes - Food and Nutrition Services*, <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY-2027-Chapter-34-FNS.pdf>

¹³ U.S. Department of Agriculture – Economic Research Service. *Food Price Outlook – Summary Findings*, (Aug. 25, 2026), <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-price-outlook/summary-findings>

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- 3) What analysis did USDA conduct regarding the effect that eliminating CSFP or reducing funding for other nutrition assistance programs would have on food insecurity, health outcomes, food costs among low-income older Americans? Please provide all analyses, memoranda, data, and other materials used in developing these proposals.
- 4) Given the administration's justification in the proposed elimination of CSFP to further support seniors through SNAP, what steps is USDA planning to expand access to SNAP for seniors, in light of recent cuts to the SNAP program under P.L.119-21?
- 5) How is USDA ensuring that seniors continue to have access to affordable, healthy, food options as grocery prices remain elevated and changes to SNAP eligibility, benefits, and work-related requirements under P.L.119-21 take effect?
- 6) Amidst rising food prices and SNAP changes that may impact food insecurity, how will USDA monitor the impacts on food insecurity rates for older adults and access to programs like SNAP and CSFP going forward?

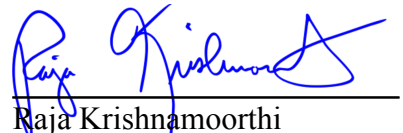
Older Americans who spent their lives working and contributing to their communities should not have to sacrifice their health, housing, or other basic needs just to put food on the table. Your Department must account for the consequences of these policies and demonstrate how it will protect older Americans from hunger. Anything less is unacceptable.

We look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,



Analilia Mejia
Member of Congress



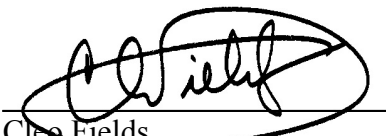
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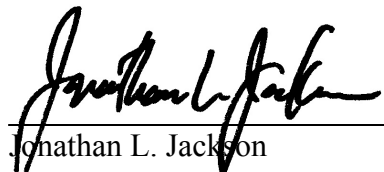
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Debbie Wasserman Schultz
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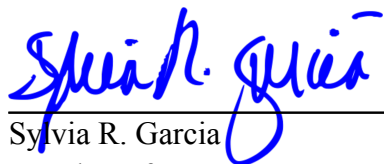
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