

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

May 19, 2026

The Honorable Stephen Vaden
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Deputy Secretary Vaden:

We write with strong concern regarding the reorganization of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. After dramatic cuts to nutrition assistance programs and the significant staff losses at FNS in the past year, this reorganization will further weaken the ability of the agency to administer federal nutrition assistance programs.

FNS administers 16 federal nutrition assistance programs including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Together, these programs help Americans put nutritious food on the table and promote healthy eating.

These programs serve tens of million Americans in all 50 states from birth to old age in homes, schools, childcare settings, and afterschool programs, among others. Unfortunately, this administration has engaged in repeated efforts to undermine these crucial programs: cancelling over 90 million pounds of food ordered for food banks and schools; enacting the deepest cuts to SNAP in history; refusing to comply with court orders to fund SNAP benefits during the government shutdown; and terminating a long-standing food insecurity survey that has measured hunger in America since the 1990s. At the same time, the USDA has greatly reduced the capacity of the Food and Nutrition Service to administer nutrition assistance programs and almost 30 percent of FNS staff have left the agency as a result of last year's Deferred Resignation Program.

USDA's reorganization announcement on April 30 would further break apart this already hobbled agency. The USDA's plan would close five of the seven regional offices and have staff relocate to different offices based on programmatic work, which would appear to reduce alignment and efficiencies among the nutrition assistance programs. In fact, the Government Accountability Office found that USDA's 2019 relocation of the Economic Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture resulted in the loss of over half those agencies' staff and a significant reduction in productivity. This reorganization push will likely result in similar or worse attrition at FNS, with a tremendous loss of capacity, expertise, and institutional memory.

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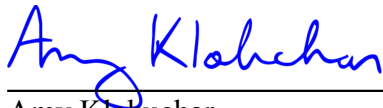
Please provide a detailed description of what steps the USDA is taking to ensure the FNS is able to meet its mission as it implements this reorganization plan, including the following, with responses to each of the following questions no later than June 5, 2026:

- How does this proposed reorganization plan take into account GAO's recommendations after the ERS and NIFA relocation, including engagement with stakeholders and staff, as well as adherence to best practices relating to change management?
- Has the USDA conducted a cost-benefit analysis on the FNS reorganization and renaming? If so, please provide a copy of any analysis.
- Please provide USDA's estimated timeline for union negotiations, notifying affected employees, and requiring affected employees to relocate.
- Please provide any estimates regarding how many current FNS employees will leave the agency as part of the reorganization. Please also provide the number and percentage of FNS employees who have received or will be receiving relocation notices to relocate, broken down by current location, job function and job function, such as program integrity, financial management, and management reviews.
- Please provide a detailed description of how USDA intends to ensure that states, households, and other stakeholders are receiving timely guidance on the implementation of the benefit cost-shift in H.R. 1 and other expected changes to nutrition assistance programs during this reorganization process and any accompanying loss of experienced FNS employees.
- With major new program rules relating to nutrition standards for various food assistance programs anticipated in coming months, most notably for the School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, please explain how USDA will manage these significant efforts in the midst of a major reorganization and in light of almost certain reduced staff capacity as a result of it.

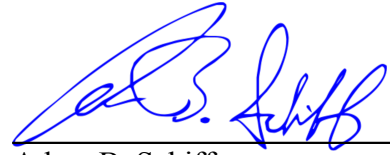
Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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Washington, DC 20510



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Agriculture, Nutrition, and
Forestry



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



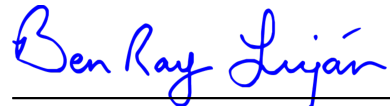
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



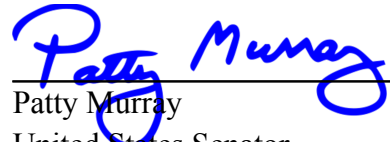
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



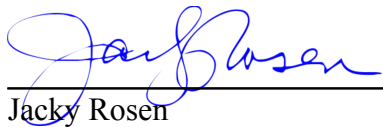
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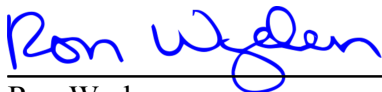
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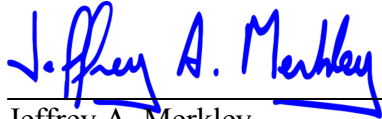
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