

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 5, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Rollins:

As members of the Maryland Congressional delegation, we urge immediate action to ensure that full and timely November Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are provided for Marylanders and families across the country.

Like millions of Americans, Maryland families are feeling the strain of rising food prices of household essentials like beef, coffee, eggs, and certain types of produce.<sup>1</sup> Uncertainty around SNAP benefits during the government shutdown means that more than 680,000 of our most vulnerable constituents—including nearly 270,000 children, 120,000 older adults, and 130,000 Marylanders with disabilities—are now unsure of how they will put food on the table.<sup>2</sup> These Marylanders, along with 42 million other Americans who depend on this critical assistance, stand to go hungry the longer that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) fails to act.

We were deeply concerned by the USDA's October 10th memorandum to states announcing the suspension of November SNAP benefits until further notice, citing the government shutdown.<sup>3</sup> The USDA is readily equipped with two critical tools to ensure the funding of SNAP benefits continue during a lapse in government funding, including: (1) a contingency fund, and (2) transfer authority under 7 U.S.C. § 2257.

Public data confirms that SNAP currently holds billions of dollars in contingency reserves.<sup>4</sup> Both the Government Accountability Office and the USDA itself have affirmed that these funds may be lawfully available during a lapse in appropriations.<sup>5</sup> Federal law explicitly provides that:

“For necessary expenses to carry out the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), \$122,382,521,000, of which \$3,000,000,000, to remain available through September 30, 2026, shall be placed in reserve for use only in such amounts and at such times as may become necessary to carry out program operations.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NewsNation, [“Grocery Prices Are Rising as Beef, Coffee Hit Record Highs,”](#) September 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Office of Governor Wes Moore, [“Governor Moore Declares State of Emergency to Address Economic Impacts of Federal Government Shutdown and Distribute \\$10 Million in Emergency Funding to Fight Food Insecurity,”](#) October 30, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> [Letter to SNAP State Agency Directors from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service](#), issued October 10, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> OpenOMB, [“Treasury Appropriation Fund Symbol:012-3505 2024/2026 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,”](#) September 28, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> GAO Report: [“U.S. Department of Agriculture—Early Payment of SNAP Benefits,”](#) September 2019.

<sup>6</sup> P.L. 118-42, §6, 138 Stat. 25, 93 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024).

Historically, the USDA has recognized and upheld this authority during lapses in government funding. This authority has long been uncontroversial. In USDA's Lapse of Funding Plan dated September 30, 2025—since removed from its website—USDA stated unequivocally:

“Congressional intent is evident that SNAP’s operations should continue since the program has been provided with multi-year contingency funds that can be used for State Administrative Expenses to ensure that the State can also continue operations during a Federal Government shutdown. These multi-year contingency funds are also available to fund participant benefits in the event that a lapse occurs in the middle of the fiscal year.”<sup>7</sup>

On October 31st, federal judges in Massachusetts and Rhode Island ruled that the Administration is legally required to continue funding SNAP benefits using contingency funds during the government shutdown. These decisions confirm USDA’s authority and obligation to act immediately to protect access to food assistance for millions of Americans. In a sharp reversal from its November 3rd court filing—where the USDA affirmed it would use its statutory authority to draw on SNAP contingency funds—President Trump has threatened to unlawfully withhold SNAP benefits.<sup>8</sup> The Administration must comply with recent court orders requiring the full use of contingency funds for SNAP. Additionally, USDA has yet to exercise its legal transfer authority under 7 U.S.C. § 2257 to provide full SNAP benefits for the month of November.<sup>9</sup> This authority was recently used to provide additional funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), ensuring that beneficiaries continued to receive WIC benefits during the government shutdown.

The USDA’s refusal to act before November 1st has resulted in \$124 million in SNAP benefits being illegally withheld and likely delayed for vulnerable Marylanders.<sup>10</sup> Our constituents who rely on SNAP need resources to provide food for their families immediately. They have turned to state and local services for help, creating an unsustainable strain on our food banks, food pantries, homeless shelters, and community action agencies. The loss of SNAP benefits ripples through Maryland’s economy. When benefits are delayed, farmers’ markets, grocers, and small retailers are impacted, and local producers lose steady demand. This impact is especially significant in Maryland’s rural communities—18 of the state’s 24 counties are state designated as rural with more than 194,000 adults and children relying on SNAP benefits.<sup>11</sup>

The USDA’s inaction prior to November 1st has forced the State of Maryland to take extreme measures to mitigate the impacts of delayed or partial SNAP benefits. On October 30th, Governor Wes Moore announced a state of emergency and surged \$10 million in emergency grant funding to respond to the cliff for SNAP.<sup>12</sup> Just days later, on November 3rd, he announced that the State would be providing \$62 million to guarantee that Maryland families receive their

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<sup>7</sup> USDA, [“U.S. Department of Agriculture Lapse of Funding Plan,”](#) September 30, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> [“Trump Threatens to Withhold SNAP Funding Until Shutdown Ends,”](#) *Politico*, 4 Nov. 2025.

<sup>9</sup> United States. *United States Code*. Title 7, § 2257. House.gov.

<sup>10</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [“SNAP’s Contingency Reserve Is Available for Regular SNAP Benefits, as USDA and OMB Have Ruled in Past,”](#) October 27, 2025.

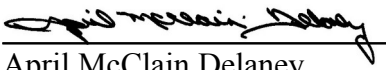
<sup>11</sup> Maryland Department of Human Services. [“Visual: SNAP Customers Served — Monthly Average — 2025.”](#) 23 May 2025,

<sup>12</sup> Office of Governor Wes Moore, [“Governor Moore Declares State of Emergency to Address Economic Impacts of Federal Government Shutdown and Distribute \\$10 Million in Emergency Funding to Fight Food Insecurity,”](#) October 30, 2025.

full November SNAP benefits.<sup>13</sup> To “put America first,” as you often say, we must ensure that no American, especially no child, goes hungry because of deliberate inaction by the USDA. We cannot play politics with food assistance for our most vulnerable Americans.

The courts have spoken clearly: the Administration must use the full amount of available contingency funds to continue SNAP benefits during the shutdown. We also strongly urge the USDA to use its transfer authority under 7 U.S.C. § 2257 to cover the remaining gap in November benefits. To provide anything less than full benefits for SNAP recipients for the month of November is unconscionable. Our offices stand ready to work with you to ensure Marylanders and families across the country continue to receive vital SNAP benefits without further delay.

Sincerely,



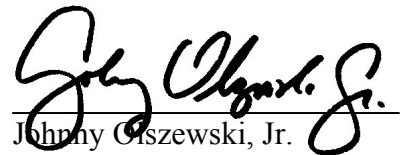
April McClain Delaney  
Member of Congress



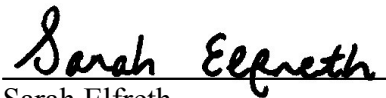
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks  
United States Senator



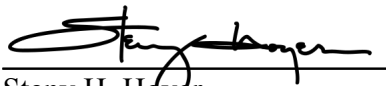
Johnny Olszewski, Jr.  
Member of Congress



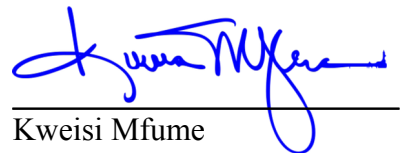
Sarah Elfreth  
Member of Congress



Glenn Ivey  
Member of Congress

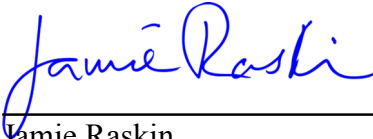


Steny H. Hoyer  
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress

<sup>13</sup> Office of Governor Wes Moore, “[Governor Moore Announces \\$62 Million in State Funding to Ensure Full November SNAP Benefits for Marylanders](#),” *Governor of Maryland*, 3 Nov. 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jamie Raskin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jamie" and last name "Raskin" clearly distinguishable.

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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress