



February 1, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
S-221 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-222 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
S-230 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
H-204 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders Schumer, McConnell, and McCarthy:

Thank you for your continued concern and support for those suffering from both the health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome the new Congress and look forward to working with you as we aim to end hunger in the United States and around the world. As the new Congress convenes, we continue to find ourselves in a deep crisis that disproportionately impacts those suffering from hunger. According to the census, 24 million adults and approximately 12 million children are struggling with food insecurity. At the same time, we are facing a possible hunger catastrophe around the globe that poses a serious threat to lives, livelihoods, and global stability. Addressing these hunger crises should be a central pillar of Congress' efforts to combat the continuing pandemic.

The Alliance to End Hunger appreciates the actions that Congress has taken to address the dire needs of children and families, but more needs to be done. We support many of the provisions in the White House's *American Rescue Plan* that will expand nutrition assistance. Chief among these provisions is an extension of the 15 percent increase in benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and a \$3 billion investment in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The Alliance is further encouraged by provisions directed at our global community; however, the Alliance is urging at least an additional \$2 billion for food security and \$500 million for nutrition support to counter what could be an even greater humanitarian catastrophe this year.

The Alliance to End Hunger appreciates the recent increase to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ushered in through the last COVID-19 relief package; however, additional actions are needed to quell the increase in hunger rates we are currently observing. The Feeding America food bank network of 200 food banks and 60,000 partner feeding agencies will face a decrease of 850 million meals this year due to the phase out of a United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Purchase and Distribution Program. Many food banks are concerned that they will not have adequate resources to meet the demand in light of this drop in USDA food purchases. The Alliance joins Feeding America in urging Congress to provide an additional

\$900 million to purchase additional food through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). We also urge Congress to invest \$543 million in the infrastructure of our nation's charitable food system. This funding will allow food banks and partner distribution organizations in every state to better serve their communities. Further, we encourage Congress to extend Pandemic EBT through the summer to ensure that children have access to food through the summer if they are unable to access a meal site.

As with health issues related to COVID, hunger is currently hitting older Americans hard. We continue to urge that, at a minimum, \$750 million in emergency funding for the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program, which provides nutritious meals, safety checks and social connection to individuals 60 and older, be included in the next COVID-19 rescue package.

Globally, we were witnessing a rise in hunger even before the pandemic hit. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 690 million people in the world were estimated to be malnourished in 2019. In the context of the pandemic, the World Food Programme estimates that the number of people suffering from acute or worse food insecurity could double from pre-pandemic levels due to food system disruptions and worsening emergencies. The Alliance to End Hunger joins many in the global development and relief community to urge Congress to provide no less than \$20 billion for the U.S. response to the global crisis. Including \$2 billion for food security programming and \$500 million for nutrition.

With the heartening promise we are witnessing through vaccine distribution; we are filled with hope that the end of the pandemic may be in sight. Unfortunately, the economic toll will be long lasting – especially for those struggling to get food on the table – and now is not the time to debate the needs of these people. They are suffering, they need help, and they need you to act. We urge you to provide the lifesaving provisions above and ensure that food security is a central part of future COVID relief.

Respectfully,



Eric Mitchell  
Executive Director  
Alliance to End Hunger

CC:

Senator Debbie Stabenow  
Senator Bob Menendez  
Congressman David Scott  
Congressman Gregory Meeks

Senator John Boozman  
Senator Jim Risch  
Congressman Glenn Thompson  
Congressman Michael McCaul

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The Alliance to End Hunger engages diverse institutions to build the public and political will to end hunger at home and abroad. Our coalition of corporations, nonprofits, universities, foundations, individuals, and more work with their unique constituencies to raise the profile of the issues of hunger, nutrition, and agriculture to elected officials and broader stakeholders.