

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 4, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

Every child in America deserves access to nutritious food as part of the school day to fuel their learning. The highly successful Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program provides just that. As you know, it helps schools across the country purchase produce from local farmers to incorporate into tasty and nutritious meals for kids, as well as provide hands-on education activities related to agriculture and nutrition. The program is good for kids, good for families, and good for farmers. USDA's own website touts the successes of this program – 61% of school food authorities said the program increased fruit and vegetable consumption and 57% said it increased access to better quality foods.¹

That's why we were alarmed and dismayed to learn that Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program grants were abruptly terminated on March 24, 2025. To the best of our knowledge, there was no communication or consultation with Congress prior to the termination of this Congressionally authorized and funded program, and we are deeply concerned about the impact this program cancellation will have on students, schools, and farmers in our districts. Farm to School program operators have been in touch with our offices, scrambling to figure out how they will continue the successful partnerships between school districts and local farmers that have been established under the program

Despite promises from this administration to support farmers and promote health, the recent actions taken by the administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are at odds with those goals. In just the past few weeks, USDA has terminated at least four programs² that achieve the goals of improving health and supporting our farmers. This is on top of the other federal programs for farmers that have been inexplicably frozen, paused, or cancelled. Coupled with the ridiculous trade war waged by the President, these actions are further exacerbating the challenges faced by rural economies and leaving many farmers wondering how they will continue to farm their land.

¹ <https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-to-school>

² On March 7th, Congress became aware that the Local Food for Schools and Local Food Purchasing Assistance Cooperative Agreements had been terminated when local stakeholders reached out to our offices. On March 27th, Congress became aware via press articles that USDA cancelled \$500 million in food deliveries for food banks. On March 24th, Congress became aware that Leahy Farm to School Grant Program was terminated when local stakeholders reached out to our offices.

We find it unacceptable that USDA continues to dismantle programs that keep farmers farming their land and keep kids fed. To that end, we are seeking answers to the following questions no later than April 11, 2025:

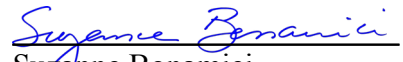
- 1) Have all grant tracks for FY25 Farm to School Grant funding been canceled, or does the USDA's communication to stakeholders only impact implementation grants? Please detail how many projects across the country will be impacted by USDA's action.
- 2) Why did the administration abruptly cancel Farm to School grants?
- 3) Please explain the authority USDA is using to terminate funding when the FY25 funding has been authorized and appropriated.
- 4) Given that Congress directed USDA to carry out this program, what is your plan for fulfilling this responsibility by awarding the FY25 funding at the earliest opportunity?
- 5) How will you ensure timely awards in future funding years?
- 6) Please report any delays or obstructions in the drawdown of current Farm to School grantee funds, and explain how USDA will help grantees resolve these issues.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this inquiry.

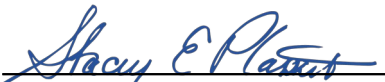
Sincerely,



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress




Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



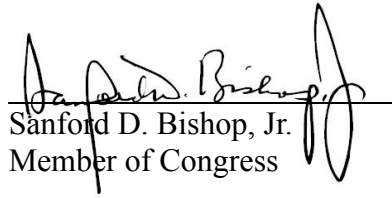
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

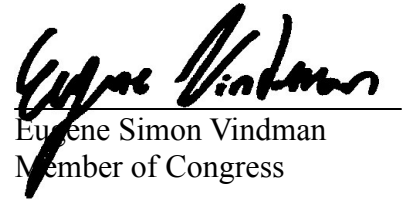


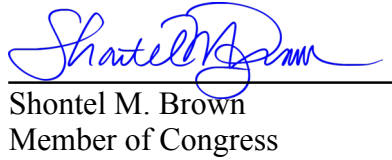
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

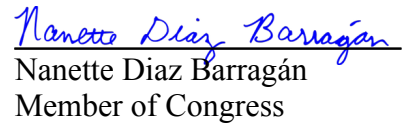


Angie Craig
Member of Congress

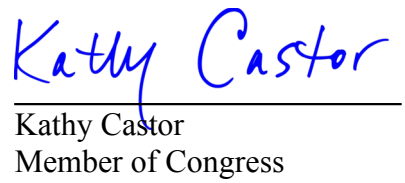

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

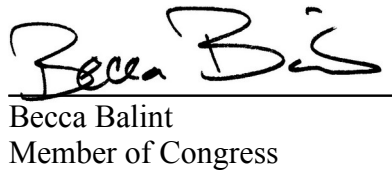

Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress

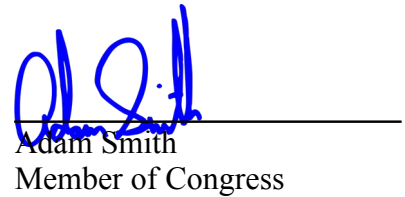

Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress

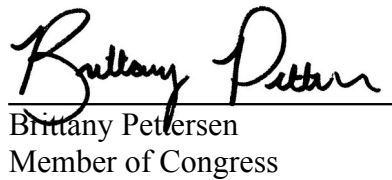

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

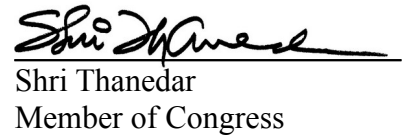

Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress

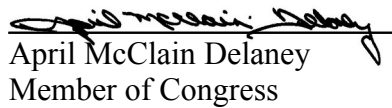

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

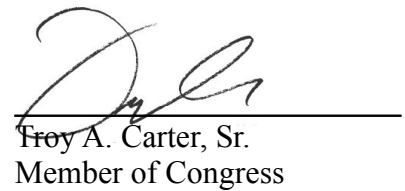

Becca Balint
Member of Congress


Adam Smith
Member of Congress

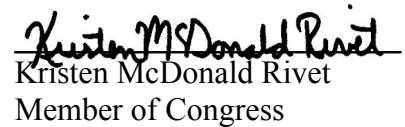

Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress


Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress

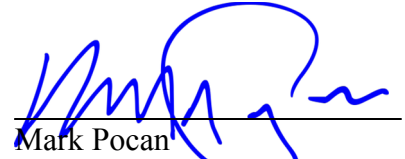

April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress


Froy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Kristen McDonald Rivet
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
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Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
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Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

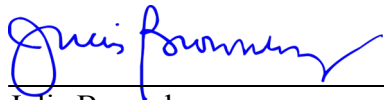

André Carson
Member of Congress


Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

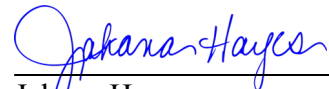

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress


MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress

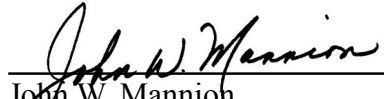

Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress