

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

September 17, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write to express our concern regarding the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) recent proposed rule regarding broad-based categorical eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and its impact on the State of Maryland.

As you know, Maryland is one of more than 40 states currently using categorical eligibility. Categorical eligibility provides states with the flexibility to use less restrictive income and asset tests in SNAP, which allows them to better support low-income working families and improve state administration while lowering administrative costs. We are alarmed that an estimated 50,000 Marylanders could stand to lose SNAP benefits if this rule is implemented. The current categorical eligibility option has been thoroughly vetted for more than two decades, and past iterations of the policies included in this proposed rule have been rejected by Congress – most recently in the 2018 Farm Bill. This proposed rule is a clear attempt to circumvent Congressional intent through the regulatory process. Additionally, as your own Department's estimates make clear, the proposed rule will increase government administrative costs by over \$2.3 billion.

Unfortunately, it is Maryland's most vulnerable residents, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities, who would suffer the painful consequences of unnecessary and preventable hunger. On behalf of our constituents, we strongly urge you to rescind this proposed rule.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate

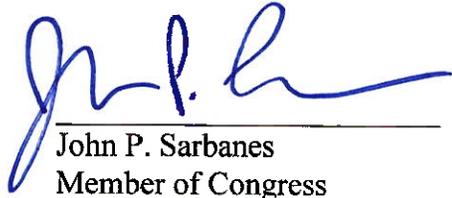

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