

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representative
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, and Minority Leader Schumer,

We write to request increased funding for the National Guard in any future relief package to ensure that our Service Members can continue supporting food banks through the duration of this emergency. Since the onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the National Guard has become a lifeline to food banks across the country, helping package and distribute food to meet unprecedented levels of need. Such federal funding will help ensure that our food banks continue to provide those in our communities with a reliable source of food.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, one in eight American households struggled to put food on the table. With unemployment currently at a record high as a result of the pandemic, the incidence of food hardship is increasing at a staggering rate. Around 95 percent of the food banks in the Feeding America network have reported a 70 percent increase in demand since the pandemic began. At the same time, food banks are dealing with temporary shortages in several food products and a steep decline in willing and able volunteers.

Thankfully, both state and federal governments have taken steps to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on our food insecure communities. On March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a nationwide emergency pursuant to Section 501(b) of the Stafford Act. With this declaration, the President authorized governors in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to activate components of their Army and Air National Guard to assist food banks with packaging and distributing food. While Service Members operate under the direction of governors, the federal government can cover the full cost of eligible activities.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was signed into law on March 27, 2020, included \$1.4 billion to support the National Guard's response to COVID-19, including the National Guard's efforts to support food banks. This level of funding can sustain up to 20,000 members of the National Guard, under the direction of the governors of each state. Unfortunately, given the fast-moving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, these funds could be depleted by the end of this month.

As we work together to address the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, we respectfully request that you include sufficient funding for the National Guard in any future relief package. Such funding during this national emergency will help ensure that our nation's food banks remain fully operational so that our communities can remain food secure.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

Josh Harder
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

Elaine Luria
Member of Congress

David Cicilline
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Scott Peters
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Xochitl Torres Small
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

Katie Porter
Member of Congress

Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Harley Rouda
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress