

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 8, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Perdue:

On behalf of the millions of Massachusetts residents that we represent, we are writing in strong opposition to the proposed rule to modify categorical eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This regulation directly violates congressional intent and would harm our constituents.

The Trump administration's own analysis suggests that the proposed rule would result in more than three million people losing their SNAP benefits. In many cases, SNAP benefits can be the difference between putting food on the table and going hungry.

The Trump administration's proposed rule will increase hunger and hardship for an estimated 90,000 people<sup>1</sup> who live in our home state of Massachusetts, where one in nine residents currently rely on SNAP to put food on the table.

In Massachusetts, we know that more than 56 percent of SNAP households are families with children,<sup>2</sup> and almost 49 percent of SNAP households are families who have an elderly or disabled household member.<sup>3</sup> The Trump Administration's own regulatory impact statement finds that "there is a potential for civil rights impacts to result if the proposed action is implemented because more elderly individuals may not otherwise meet the SNAP eligibility requirements". As members of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation, we refuse to stand idly by while the Trump Administration proposes a rule that will have civil rights implications for nearly 49 percent of SNAP households in our state.

Congress rejected this very proposal, on a bipartisan basis, in the 2018 Farm Bill. Overriding the law without congressional authorization defies the clear, recently-expressed intention of the U.S. Congress. This distressing action will have significant, harmful impacts on hungry families and

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<sup>1</sup> Boston Globe <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2019/07/25/mass-could-affected-trump-callous-food-stamp-cuts/okaiPnaHQDSBTtRieBcGqK/story.html>

<sup>2</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap\\_factsheet\\_massachusetts.pdf](https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_massachusetts.pdf)


<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

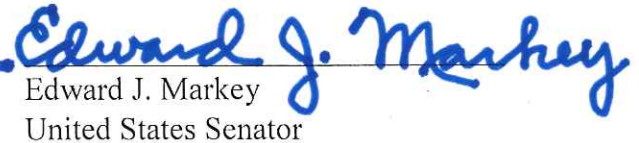
children across the country, including in Massachusetts. The Trump administration has circulated multiple conflicting estimates of the number of children who would lose access to free or reduced meals during the school day, which only underscores our concern that the full extent of negative impacts resulting from this rule are unknown even to those proposing it.

The purpose of implementing broad-based categorical eligibility is to reduce the burden on low-income households by not repeating eligibility verification tests, and to increase efficiency and further streamline state and local government administrative efforts. Implementing this proposed rule will increase hardship for low-income households, and will waste state and local resources on duplicative eligibility determinations.

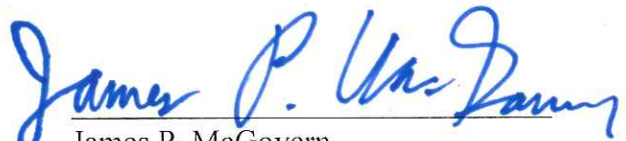
We strongly urge the Trump administration to rescind this proposed rule.

Sincerely,

  
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

  
Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress

  
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

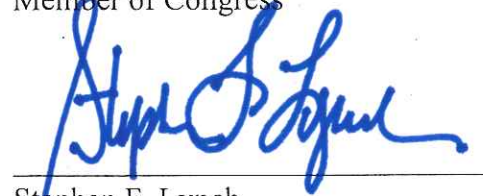
  
Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

  
Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

  
William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

  
Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

  
Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress

  
Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress