

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write to urge you to approve Florida's request to administer the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and to send additional Emergency Food Assistance Program resources to Florida regions in need.

South Florida has become an epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak in the United States. At the time of this writing, there are 3,764 [confirmed cases](#) of COVID-19 in Miami-Dade and Broward counties alone and 7,773 throughout the state.

Both counties have alarmingly high poverty rates that at 12.6 and 16 percent, respectively, are [above the national average](#), and thousands of Floridians will likely be in need of additional food assistance in the coming months.

Florida has already experienced a surge in applications for unemployment benefits. More than [74,000 people](#) filed unemployment claims during the week of March 15 and the actual number of people seeking benefits is probably much higher given how overwhelmed the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity is due to high call volume and website traffic. Sadly, the number of people needing assistance will increase significantly as the virus continues to spread and businesses are forced to close their doors.

Florida also is likely to be disproportionately impacted by this public health crisis because of its sizable vulnerable population. People over the age of 65 make up [20 percent](#) of the state's population and according to the CDC, are at [heightened risk](#) of severe illness. In addition, [16.5 percent](#) of Floridians under the age of 65 are uninsured.

For these reasons, we ask that you approve the request submitted by Governor Ron DeSantis on March 22 to activate D-SNAP for the state of Florida. In this moment of crisis, the federal government must be a reliable resource for states and ensure that every possible policy option is exhausted.

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Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to working with you to ensure the wellbeing of all Floridians.

Sincerely,



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

/s/

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Charlie Christ
Member of Congress

Val B. Demings
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Al Lawson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress

Marco Rubio
United States Senator

Donna Shalala
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress