

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 16, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Susan E. Rice  
Director, Domestic Policy Council  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden and Ambassador Rice,

We are pleased that the White House will hold a conference on Hunger, Health, and Nutrition later this month and are hopeful that the Conference will help to propel the bold policies needed to ensure nutrition security for this and future generations. We thank the Administration for taking important steps to amplify these issues and believe the Administration must continue to take additional actions to prioritize hunger, health, and nutrition across the federal government. To that end, we urge you to issue an Executive Order to require implementation of food service guidelines across all federally owned and operated facilities and to establish a timeline and process for implementing comprehensive, values-driven food procurement standards for federal agencies.

The *Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities* (FSG) are evidence-based standards to align federal food service with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and advance food safety, facility efficiency, environmental support, and community development.<sup>i</sup> Developed by an interagency working group led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the FSG are currently voluntary, and their implementation has been sporadic and challenging to monitor.

When researchers modeled the impact of implementing the FSG in worksite cafeterias in a representative population of government employees, they found the intervention would lead to fewer heart attacks, strokes, and cases of diabetes, as well as heart disease- and stroke-related deaths over employees' lifetimes.<sup>ii</sup> Requiring implementation of the FSG would confer these benefits to more than 5 million veterans who receive healthcare from VA hospitals, more than 1 million military service members, 158,000 people incarcerated in federal prisons, and tens of thousands of Native Americans receiving healthcare services through Indian Health Services hospitals and federal employees eating in federal cafeterias.

The federal government also has a crucial opportunity to leverage its massive food purchasing footprint to advance administration goals around racial justice and equity, climate mitigation and environmental justice, worker well-being, supporting socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and local agriculture, nutrition security, and animal welfare. For more than a decade, local governments, school districts, universities, and private sector institutions have implemented successful models for values-aligned food purchasing that the federal government can emulate.

For example, the City of Los Angeles and LA Unified School District adopted the Good Food Purchasing Program, a flexible, values-driven procurement framework in 2012. Impacting \$1.1 billion in annual spending, the program's ripple effects have created new union jobs; provided a new market for local farms; reduced greenhouse gas emissions, pesticide use, and water use; and improved the nutritional quality of meals for 650,000 students.<sup>iii</sup> Implementing a values-aligned food purchasing policy at the federal level can spur the healthy, just, and resilient U.S. food system that we desperately need.

By issuing an Executive Order, the federal government would send a clear signal to all that the federal government is willing to “walk the walk” when it comes to promoting healthy diets. We look forward to working with the Administration on leveraging its food procurement to promote justice, equity, and sustainability across the federal government.

Sincerely,



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Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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David J. Trone  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress



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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



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Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress

<sup>i</sup> Food Service Guidelines Federal Work Group. Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2017.

[https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/guidelines\\_for\\_federal\\_concessions\\_and\\_vending\\_operations.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/guidelines_for_federal_concessions_and_vending_operations.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> Abrahams-Gessel S, et al. Implementing federal food service guidelines in federal and private worksite cafeterias in the United States leads to improved health outcomes and is cost saving. *J Public Health Pol.* 2022;43:266-280.

<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41271-022-00344-y>.

<sup>iii</sup> Stephens, A. Tracking the Ripple Effects of LA's Good Food Purchasing Program.

<https://goodfoodpurchasing.org/tracking-the-ripple-effects-of-las-good-food-purchasing-program/>