

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1309

August 28, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20228

Dear Secretary Perdue:

The unique challenges resulting from the deadly coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic that has killed more than 180,000 Americans in a matter of months continues to negatively impact school district operations across Illinois and throughout our Nation.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to immediately extend, for the entire 2020-2021 academic year, all school meal flexibilities and waivers under authorities Congress provided the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act of 2020 (Public Law No. 116-127).

Emergency authorities granted to USDA by Congress have been critical to ensuring that millions of food-insecure students and their families received nutritious meals over the past several months. Inexplicably, USDA recently announced it would not extend these critical waivers and flexibilities to school districts, unnecessarily increasing costly burdens for parents and school districts already stretched thin by the impacts of COVID-19 on their communities.

The confusing actions taken by USDA in recent days not only imperil the health and wellbeing of students across the Nation but further erodes trust between USDA, States and the American people. Again, I strongly urge you to reconsider your recent actions and extend all school meal flexibilities and waivers through 2020-2021 school year. Thank you for your immediate consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator