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PENNSYLVANIA

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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3805

May 4, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write in support of Pennsylvania's request for implementation of the expedited online purchasing option for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP). The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) submitted its State Plan for Providing Online Purchasing to provide the option for online purchasing and delivery services for SNAP recipients on April 30, 2020 and hopes to be able to offer the option by June 1, 2020.

The COVID-19 outbreak has required many individuals in Pennsylvania and across the country to self-quarantine and engage in social distancing. This is necessary to protect the health of our communities but has consequently made it challenging for some SNAP households to travel to stores to purchase food. This is especially true for seniors and immunocompromised individuals, and thus it is critical to ensure online delivery is an option for all customers, including SNAP recipients.

DHS has taken the necessary steps in order to mitigate risks associated with the proposed expedited timeline to bring SNAP online purchasing to Pennsylvania. These steps include coordination and discussions with the EBT processor (Conduent), the third party processor/secure PIN-entry provide and the retailers currently authorized for online purchasing. DHS has developed a detailed timeline and is able to make the necessary updates to the system and have the technical resources available to implement this plan.

Approval of this plan will enable any SNAP household in Pennsylvania to utilize online purchasing through the available retailers. As Pennsylvania continues to implement critical social-distancing measures to protect the health and safety of students during this pandemic, it is vital to ensure that SNAP recipients have access to the same delivery and ordering services that are currently available to other customers across the Commonwealth. For these reasons, I respectfully request you provide full, fair and expeditious consideration of Pennsylvania's request to implement online SNAP purchasing.

I appreciate USDA's efforts to expedite the process through which states can participate in the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot. Pennsylvania's participation in the program would provide an important step forward for expanding delivery options SNAP recipients. At the same time, there is even more that needs to be done to expand the options available for SNAP delivery, and I urge

USDA to continue to work to promote and facilitate additional delivery mechanisms, including the use of point of sale (POS) devices.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration. Please include this letter in the official record of the application. Consistent with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, I also respectfully request that you keep me informed of the status of this application. Finally, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, your team can be in touch with Alyssa Charney on my staff at alyssa_charney@casey.senate.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Casey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" and last name "Casey" clearly distinguishable.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator