

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

March 8, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We write today with deep concerns regarding the Biden Administration's proposed rule for the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) that will reduce the amount of milk available to WIC families. This proposed reduction of dairy in the WIC food packages will have unintended and significant negative effects on the health of WIC participants, and we strongly urge you to maintain the current WIC dairy allotments in the final rule.

The proposed rule would result in a substantial reduction in the maximum monthly allowance (MMA) for milk through the WIC program. The current MMA for children 12 to 23 months old is 16 quarts. Under the proposed rule, this amount would be reduced to 12 quarts, a total monthly reduction of 4 quarts. For children ages 2-4 years old, the MMA would be reduced from 16 quarts to 14 quarts under the proposed rule. For pregnant and partially breastfeeding mothers, the MMA would be reduced from 22 quarts to 16 quarts under the proposed rule. These substantial reductions in the amount of milk parents can buy for their children will exacerbate the crisis families are already facing with skyrocketing prices at the grocery store.

Dairy products provide nutrients that are vital to the health of infants, children, mothers, and expectant mothers. According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, about 90 percent of the U.S. population does not meet dairy consumption recommendations.<sup>1</sup> We are greatly concerned that reducing dairy in WIC food packages will negatively impact the nutritional intakes and health of program participants, as it will decrease their access to dairy's nutrients at life stages key for health and development.

Dairy is very popular with WIC participants, as three of the top five redeemed items in the program are dairy products.<sup>2</sup> Reducing the amount of dairy available in WIC food packages will make WIC less attractive to eligible families and we will see program participation decrease. According to a recent poll of WIC participants, if USDA reduces the amount of dairy available

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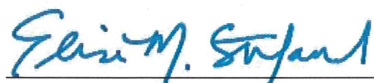
<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. December 2020. [https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Americans-2020-2025.pdf](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Gleason, S., Wroblewska, K., Trippe, C., Kline, N., Meyers Mathieu, K., Breck, A., Marr, J., & Bellows, D. WIC Food Cost-Containment Practices Study: Final report. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. 2021. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/WIC-FoodCostContainmentPractices.pdf>

for program participants, one-fifth of WIC beneficiaries stated they will not re-enroll in WIC and over one-third said they are unsure if they will re-enroll in WIC.<sup>3</sup> This data is highly concerning and the Administration should take this information into account in order to address these concerns in the final rule.

The proposed rule includes a number of changes to the WIC food packages that will strengthen the program and support access to nutritious dairy products. We are encouraged that USDA has provided container size flexibility for WIC products, which will improve families' food choices and increase access to certain foods, including dairy items. However, these improvements to the WIC program are undermined by the overall reduction in the amount of milk available to WIC families. We strongly urge you to not reduce the amount of milk available to WIC families and to instead maintain the current WIC dairy allotments in the final rule. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.


Sincerely,



Elise M. Stefanik  
Member of Congress



Josh Harder  
Member of Congress



Glenn "GT" Thompson  
Member of Congress



Patrick K. Ryan  
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson  
Member of Congress



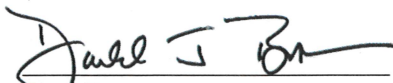
Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



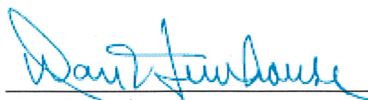
Michael V. Lawler  
Member of Congress



Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



Don Bacon  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress

<sup>3</sup> Morning Consult. "National Tracking Poll." Dec. 14-16, 2022. [www.idfa.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2212124\\_IDFA\\_WIC\\_USDA\\_Benefits\\_December\\_2022\\_TOPLINES.pdf](http://www.idfa.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2212124_IDFA_WIC_USDA_Benefits_December_2022_TOPLINES.pdf).



Bryan Steil  
Member of Congress



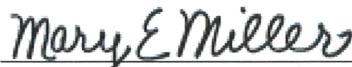
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Trent Kelly  
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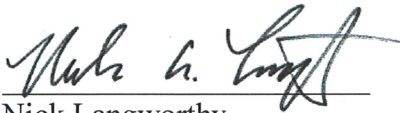
Marcus J. Molinaro  
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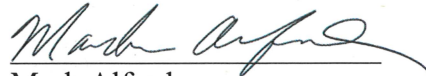
John Joyce, M.D.  
Member of Congress




Max Miller  
Member of Congress



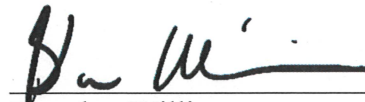
Nick Langworthy  
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