

TROY A. CARTER, SR.  
2<sup>nd</sup> DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

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**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-1802

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REGIONAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL  
REGION 7

May 3, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I was delighted to learn that on May 1, the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) confirmed that the agency will submit a notice of intent to the USDA to participate in the Summer EBT program. In February of this year, the Department had initially declined to participate in this important program, which offers grocery-buying benefits to families who have school-aged children that receive free and reduced cost meals during the school year. Immediately after that announcement, I called on the Landry administration to change course and began working with leaders at the state and local level to bring these critical funds to the state. That hard work has paid off, and all of Louisiana will be better off for it.

I appreciate that USDA is now working with DCFS to ready the program for families to receive benefits beginning on June 4. Given the late notice from the state, I understand that some waivers will need to be granted. I am requesting that USDA please use the maximum flexibility and expediency possible to implement this critical program and have benefits accessible for families by the anticipated June 4 start date.

The benefits of this program for the children of Louisiana are profound. During the school year, schools are where some children receive free or reduced breakfast and lunch. The summer months, where children are mostly not in school, pose a particular hardship for children and families without these meal programs available. I am extremely grateful to the many leaders in Louisiana who asked DCFS reverse course, and that DCSF reevaluated its decision and decided to do the right thing for the people of the state.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and for your continued partnership bringing this program to Louisiana. Please let me know how my office can be helpful during this implementation period.

Sincerely,



Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
Member of Congress

cc: Representative Glenn "GT" Thompson, Chair, House Committee on Agriculture

Representative David Scott, Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture

Representative Brett Guthrie, Chair, House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health

Representative Anna Eshoo, Ranking Member, House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health