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**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Agriculture**  
Room 1301, Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6001

(202) 225-2171

May 16, 2016

SCOTT C. GRAVES,  
STAFF DIRECTOR  
ROBERT L. LAREW,  
MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary  
Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Kevin W. Concannon  
Under Secretary  
Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services  
Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Under Secretary Concannon:

We write today to express our concern regarding the Food and Nutrition Service's ("FNS") recently proposed rule to modify retailer eligibility requirements in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP"). This proposal contains several provisions that restrict the ability of small format retailers to participate in SNAP and in turn jeopardize access to food for the more than 45 million low income SNAP beneficiaries, including more than 20 million children.

When Congress reached a bipartisan agreement in the Agricultural Act of 2014, it achieved a balance between the need to increase the nutritional selection for SNAP beneficiaries and the need to ensure new requirements would not limit retailer participation and reduce access in the program. However, the proposed rule announced on February 17, 2016 contained several provisions that went beyond Congressional intent and what was set forth in the statutory language.


According to FNS data, approximately 106,531 convenience stores are authorized SNAP retailers. Based on survey data, tens of thousands of stores would immediately be ineligible to participate as an authorized SNAP retailer if the rule were enacted as drafted. Additionally, in testimony before the House Appropriations Committee Agriculture Subcommittee, Undersecretary Concannon testified that FNS estimated the cost of compliance for the proposed rule would be \$140 per store. However retailers, on average, estimate the cost of the proposal would amount to approximately \$5,000 per month per store to implement.


We are concerned this proposal will have unintended adverse effects on SNAP beneficiaries by forcing many small format retailers out of the program, which would limit a family's access to food. We urge you to reflect the careful balance reached in the statutory language under the Agricultural Act of 2014 and apply those policies to your final rule.


We look forward to working with you as FNS considers modifications to the proposed rule, and thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

  
Chairman K. Michael Conaway (TX-11)  
Committee on Agriculture

  
Ranking Member Collin C. Peterson (MN-07)  
Committee on Agriculture

  
Chairwoman Jackie Walorski (IN-02)  
Subcommittee on Nutrition

  
Ranking Member James P. McGovern (MA-02)  
Subcommittee on Nutrition

  
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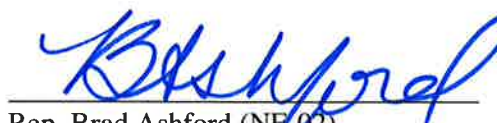
  
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Rep. Brad Ashford (NE-02)

  
Rep. Barbara Lee (CA-13)

  
Rep. Doug Collins (GA-09)

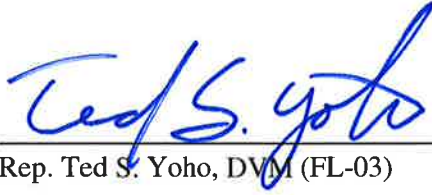
  
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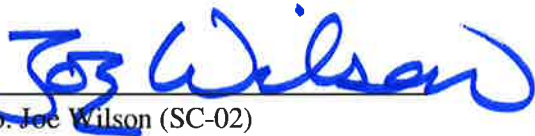
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Rep. Timothy Murphy (PA-18)



Rep. Mike Rogers (AL-03)



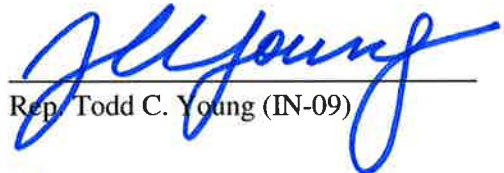
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Rep. Charles J. "Chuck" Fleischmann (TN-03)



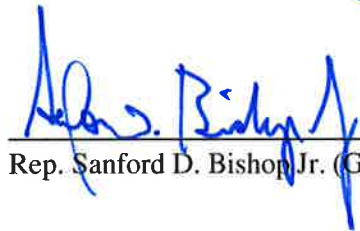
Rep. Brenda L. Lawrence (MI-14)



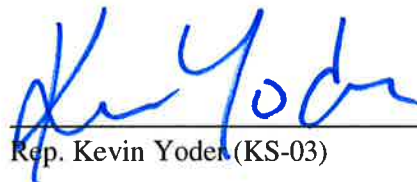
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Rep. Trent Franks (AZ-08)



Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-02)



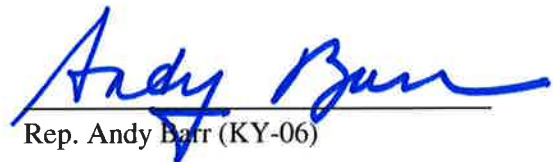
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Rep. Carlos Curbelo (FL-26)



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Rep. Erik Paulsen (MN-03)



Rep. Sam Farr (CA-20)



Rep. Mimi Walters (CA-45)



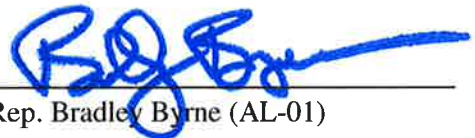
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Rep. Mike Bost (IL-12)



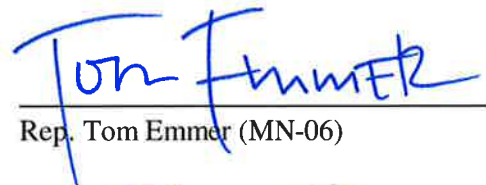
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Rep. Tom Emmer (MN-06)



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Rep. Todd Rokita (IN-04)



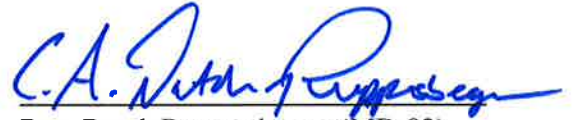
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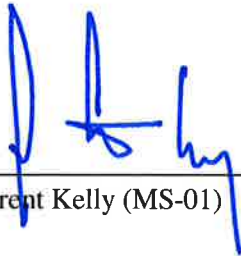
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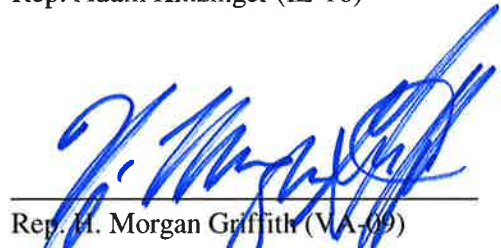
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Rep. Adam Kinzinger (IL-16)




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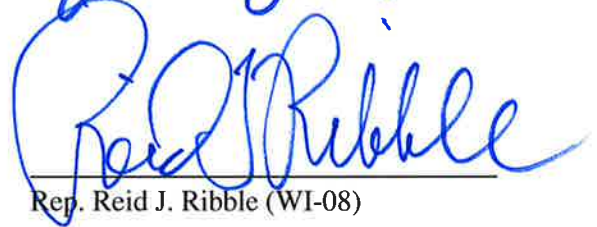
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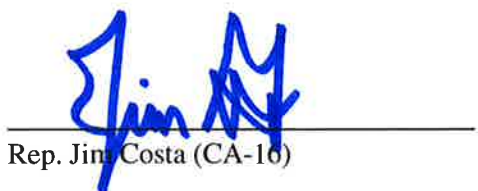
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Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03)



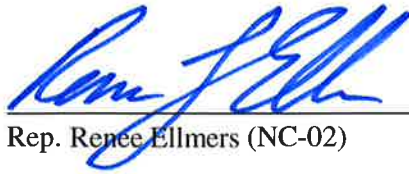
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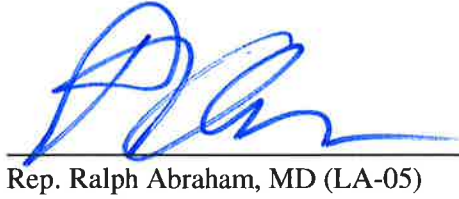
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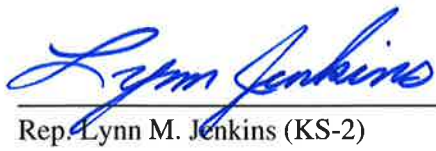
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Rep. Dina Titus (NV-1)



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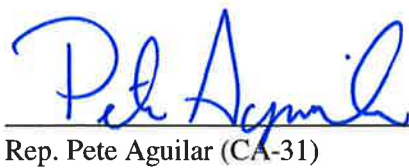
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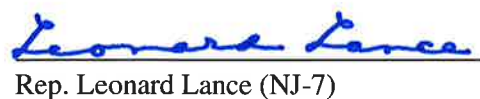
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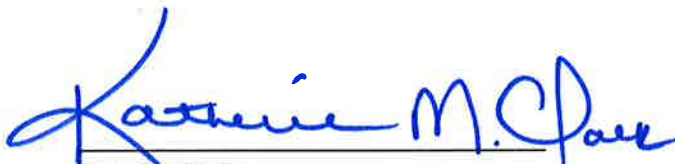
  
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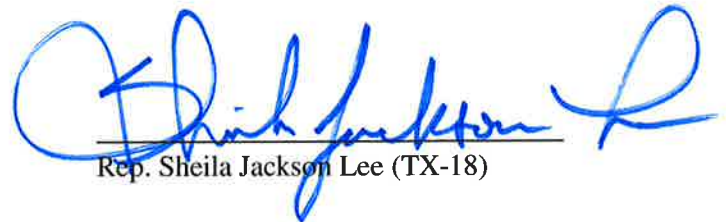
  
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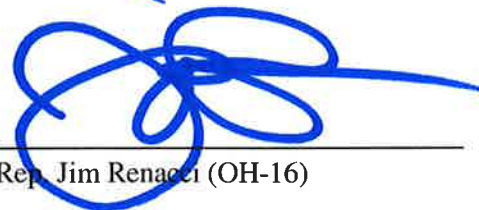
  
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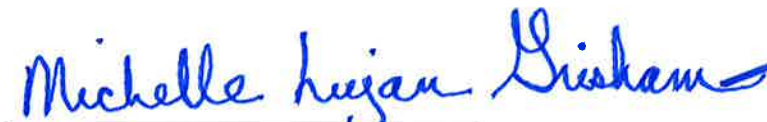
  
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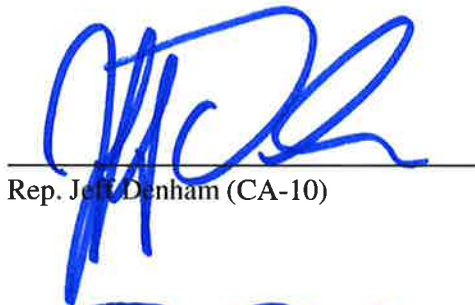
  
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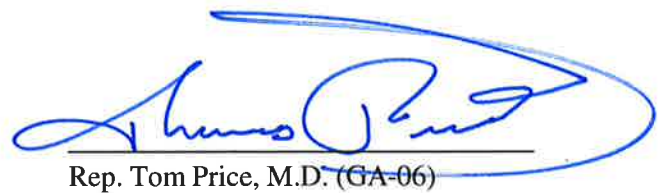
  
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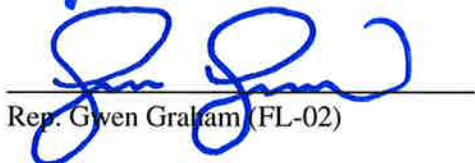
  
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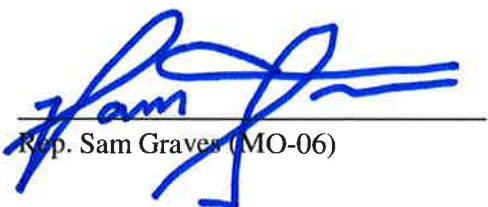
  
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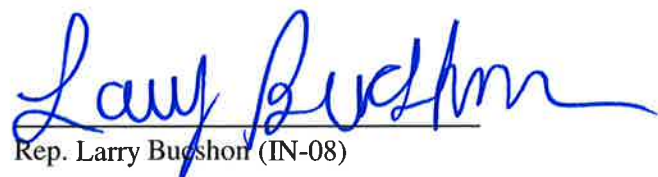
  
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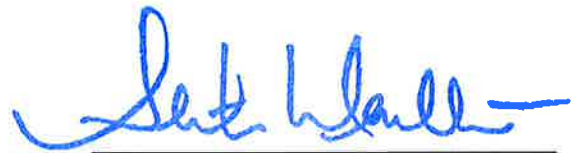
  
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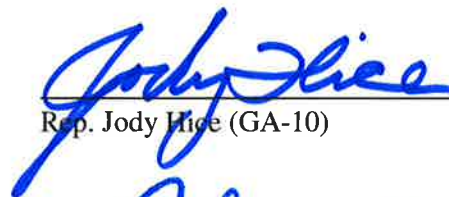
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