

DANIELLE FRIEL OTTEN, MEMBER
155TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

34 EAST WING
P.O. BOX 202155
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2155
(717) 783-5009
FAX: (717) 772-2943

631 POTTSTOWN PIKE
EXTON, PENNSYLVANIA 19341
(484) 200-8259
TOLL-FREE: (833) 787-3176
FAX: (484) 200-8269



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

EDUCATION
ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION
GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT
HEALTH
HUMAN SERVICES
LIQUOR CONTROL

April 2, 2025

The Honorable John Fetterman
142 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dave McCormick
SH-702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chrissy Houlahan
1727 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Fetterman, Senator McCormick, and Representative Houlahan,

We are writing to express our extreme concern regarding recent cancellations of food orders from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and funding cuts to the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program. These USDA programs are critical lifelines for our constituents in Chester County and for more than one million Pennsylvanians who face food insecurity. These cuts also directly affect nearly 200 Pennsylvania farms, with ripple impacts to our local economies and farming communities.

Last week, the Chester County Food Bank received the troubling news that \$250,000 worth of vital TEFAP orders have been canceled for the quarter beginning April 1, 2025. These cancellations include essential items like proteins, eggs, and dairy products. If this trend continues, the Chester County Food Bank alone could face up to \$1 million in canceled food orders over the next year, threatening their ability to meet the growing need for food assistance here in our county.

These cuts and cancellations harm our most vulnerable neighbors and constituents. To qualify for TEFAP in Pennsylvania, a household's income may not exceed 185% of the federal poverty level. And the TEFAP cancellations create ripple effects for the more than 40,000 families served by the Chester County Food Bank. To make up for the loss in food supply from TEFAP, the Chester County Food Bank would need to spend significantly more than \$250,000 to purchase these much-needed food items at retail prices, affecting how much food can be purchased for other households.

Adding to the challenge, the USDA has also withdrawn \$145,000 in LFPA funding previously allocated for the Chester County Food bank to purchase products from local farmers. While the Chester County Food Bank plans to continue its local farm partnerships out of its own funds, this further impacts the food bank's ability to meet growing demand, and not all food banks across the state will be able to do the same.

Across Pennsylvania, the LFPA program has been instrumental in supporting local farmers and strengthening our agricultural sector while simultaneously addressing hunger and ensuring that children, families, and seniors have access to fresh produce, proteins, eggs, and dairy products. During times of economic hardship, TEFAP has been a safety net that prevents countless Pennsylvanians from going hungry. Reducing funding for these programs would exacerbate existing food insecurity and place an unsustainable burden on our charitable food network.

As state legislators representing Chester County, we urge you to take immediate and decisive action to reinstate these critical TEFAP orders and protect LFPA and TEFAP funding to ensure that the Chester County Food Bank and other food banks across our commonwealth have the resources they need to continue fighting hunger.

These programs are essential investments in the health and well-being of our communities. We implore you to:

- Advocate vigorously for the restoration of the canceled TEFAP orders
- Strongly oppose any proposed cuts to LFPA and TEFAP in congressional budget negotiations.
- Highlight the positive impact of these programs on our local farmers, food banks, and vulnerable populations.
- Support legislation that secures, strengthens, and expands access to programs that address the growing need for food assistance.

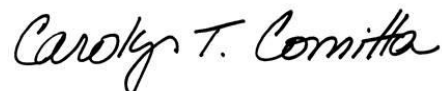
The food security of our fellow Pennsylvanians is a matter of utmost urgency. Your leadership in protecting these vital programs is crucial.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to your prompt and effective action.

Sincerely,



State Representative Danielle Friel Otten
155th Legislative District



State Senator Carolyn Comitta
19th Senatorial District



State Representative Dan K. Williams
74th Legislative District



State Senator Katie Muth
44th Senatorial District



State Representative Paul Friel
26th Legislative District



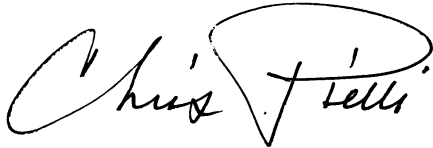
State Senator John Kane
9th Senatorial District



State Representative Melissa Shusterman
157th Legislative District



State Representative Christina Sappey
158th Legislative District



State Representative Chris Pielli
156th Legislative District



State Representative Kristine Howard
167th Legislative District