

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

April 29, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Perdue,

We are writing to request that USDA expeditiously approve New York State's request for approval to operate Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer, also known as Pandemic EBT. New York State has submitted their plan and it was received by USDA on March 25, 2020, but is still pending approval.

As you know, Pandemic EBT is a new program authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) which provides assistance to families of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals dealing with school closures. This assistance is in the form of an EBT card that is provided to households with the value of the free school breakfast and lunch reimbursement rates for days that schools are closed. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, this program would permit New York State to provide benefits similar to SNAP benefits to children who normally receive free or reduced price school meals.

Currently ten states have been approved to operate a Pandemic EBT program, with the most recent approvals coming on April 24, 2020. With New York State being the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, and school closures beginning in New York City on March 15 and statewide on March 18, it is imperative that New York State's request be approved so they can start feeding hungry kids immediately.

Over a million children in New York continue to be hungry while this request remains unapproved. We urge you to immediately approve their Pandemic EBT request. Thank you for your careful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

/s/ Charles E. Schumer

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator