



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

April 14th, 2020

Delivered via email

Senator Elizabeth Warren
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Katherine Clark
2448 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Edward Markey
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
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Representative Seth Moulton
1127 Longworth
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Richard Neal
2309 Rayburn House Office Building
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Representative Ayanna Pressley
1108 Longworth HOB
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Representative James McGovern
408 Cannon House Office Building
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Representative Stephen Lynch
2109 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Lori Trahan
1616 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Representative William Keating
2351 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Joseph Kennedy III
304 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Re: Authorizing the use of Massachusetts SNAP EBT cards for online grocery purchases

Honorable delegation members,

Thank you for your tireless service during this time of unprecedented crisis. Today, we the undersigned write this letter to advocate on behalf of Massachusetts residents who receive federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. We are requesting that a provision be included in the upcoming Federal stimulus package being debated by the U.S.

Congress to allow for Massachusetts to participate in the Food and Nutrition Service Online Purchasing Pilot program.

Federal- and State-issued ‘Social Distancing Guidelines’ encourage individuals to avoid travel or gathering in public spaces. Many Americans can honor these guidelines by using mobile applications or websites to order groceries to their doorstep. Individuals receiving SNAP benefits, however, currently do not have this safe shopping alternative. **On the contrary, Massachusetts SNAP recipients must take additional risk to their health and safety, and to the health and safety of others, by traveling to the grocery store to purchase food with their SNAP EBT cards in person.**

SNAP benefits provide a lifeline to food security for so many members of our communities of color. Studies have shown that individuals receiving SNAP benefits are more likely to have diabetes and asthma, and are therefore at greater risk of the most life-threatening symptoms of COVID-19. This is directly tied to the fact that, for a variety of well-documented reasons, our black and brown residents disproportionately suffer from these and many of the other “underlying conditions” associated with higher COVID-19 morbidity rates, like hypertension. In fact, a recent report from the Boston Public Health Commission showed that the four neighborhoods with the largest population of black and brown individuals had the highest number of documented COVID-19 cases.

Recipients of SNAP benefits deserve equal access to food and other daily essential items through online purchase and delivery. As Massachusetts enters a predicted surge in COVID-19 cases, the lives and wellbeing of all residents depends more than ever on this access. Including this measure authorizing USDA to allow online purchase and delivery for SNAP recipients in upcoming stimulus legislation will protect the health and safety of all residents in Massachusetts by allowing for greater social distancing. **It is equally important that Congress ensure that the USDA covers all relevant costs to Massachusetts associated with the information technology needed for implementation and delivery fees.** That way, we can all do our part in flattening the curve.

Thank you for you again for your service and for your urgent attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Representative Nika Elugardo, 15th Suffolk District

Senator Nick Collins, 1st Suffolk District

Representative Maria Duaine Robinson, 6th Middlesex District

Representative Jay Livingstone, 8th Suffolk District

Representative Christine Barber, 34th Middlesex District

Representative Mindy Domb, 3rd Hampshire District

Representative Claire Cronin, 11th Plymouth District

Representative Lindsay N. Sabadosa, 1st Hampshire District
Representative Patricia A. Haddad, 5th Bristol District
Representative Cristina Minicucci, 14th Essex District
Senator Rebecca Rausch, Norfolk, Bristol, and Middlesex District
Representative Frank Moran, 17th Essex District
Senator Joanne M. Comerford, Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester District
Senator Patricia D. Jehlen, Second Middlesex District
Senator William Brownsberger, 2nd Suffolk and Middlesex District
Representative Natalie Blais, 1st Franklin District
Representative Louis L. Kafka, 8th Norfolk District
Representative Susannah Whipps, 2nd Franklin District
Representative Natalie Higgins, 4th Worcester District
Representative Jack Patrick Lewis, 7th Middlesex District
Representative Russell E. Holmes Democrat, 6th Suffolk District
Representative Tommy Vitolo, 15th Norfolk District
Representative James Hawkins, 2nd Bristol District
Representative Denise Provost, 27th Middlesex District
Representative Kate Hogan, 3rd Middlesex District
Senator Michael Moore, 2nd Worcester District
Representative Marcos Devers, 16th Essex District
Representative Adrian Madaro, 1st Suffolk District
Representative Tram Nguyen, 18th Essex District
Representative William M. Straus, 10th Bristol District
Representative Paul Mark, 2nd Berkshire District
Representative David H.A. LeBoeuf, 17th Worcester District
Representative Kay Khan, 11th Middlesex District
Representative José F. Tosado, 9th Hampden District
Senator Anne Gobi, Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex District
Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier, 3rd Berkshire District
Representative Lori Erlich, 8th Essex District
Senator John F. Keenan, Norfolk and Plymouth District
Representative Tami Gouveia, 14th Middlesex District
Senator James T. Welch, 6th Hampden District

Representative William Smitty Pignatelli, 4th Berkshire District
Senator James B. Eldridge, Middlesex and Worcester District
Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, 2nd Suffolk District
Senator Mark Montigny, 2nd Bristol and Plymouth District
Senator Paul Feeney, Bristol and Norfolk District
Representative Gerry Cassidy, 9th Plymouth District
Representative John H. Rogers, 12th Norfolk District
Representative Kathleen LaNatra, 12th Plymouth District
Senator Barry R. Finegold, 2nd Essex & Middlesex District
Representative Aaron Vega, 5th Hampden District
Representative Kevin G. Honan, 17th Suffolk District
Representative Andres X. Vargas, 3rd Essex District
Representative Bud L. Williams, 11th Hampden District
Representative Carlos González, 10th Hampden District
Senator Walter F. Timilty, Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth District
Representative Elizabeth Miranda, 5th Suffolk District
Representative Tackey Chan, 2nd Norfolk District
Representative Rady Mom, 18th Middlesex District
Representative Paul J. Donato, 35th Middlesex District
Representative Joan Meschino, 3rd Plymouth District
Senator Marc R. Pacheco Democrat, 1st Plymouth and Bristol District
Representative Antonio F. D. Cabral Democrat, 13th Bristol District
Representative Mary Keefe, 15th Worcester District
Senator Bruce E. Tarr, 1st Essex and Middlesex District
Senator Michael John Barrett, 3rd Middlesex District
Representative Elizabeth A. Malia Democrat, 11th Suffolk District
Representative Mike Connolly, 26th Middlesex District
Representative Ruth B. Balsler, 12th Middlesex District
Representative Dave Decoste, 5th Plymouth District
Representative David Paul Linsky Democrat, 5th Middlesex District
Representative Daniel R. Carey, 2nd Hampshire District
Representative Kate Lipper Garabedian, 32nd Middlesex District
Senator Eric P. Lesser, 1st Hampden and Hampshire District

Representative Michelle L. Ciccolo, 15th Middlesex District

Representative Michelle M. DuBois, 10th Plymouth District

Representative Marjorie C. Decker, 25th Middlesex District