Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 14, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Thank you for your leadership in charting a bold national strategy to end hunger, promote nutrition, and build a healthier future for all Americans.[1] We appreciate the national strategy's commitment to fostering an environment that makes it easier for Americans to choose healthy food options, and we commend its proposal to increase the availability of plant-based foods at federal facilities. Our federal government spends billions of dollars on food procurement each year and can play an important role in empowering and providing consumers with healthy food offerings. Today, we write to encourage your administration to work with federal agencies to make a plant-based option available everywhere our federal government serves a meal—from museums to national parks, and federal agency cafeterias to military bases.

A high-quality plant-based diet, rich in essential minerals, vitamins, healthy fats, and fiber, can bolster our immune systems, lower inflammation, and mitigate diet-related diseases including heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and chronic diseases. A plant-based diet can also help reduce cholesterol, inflammation, and high blood pressure. A recent randomized clinical trial found that a healthy plant-based diet can lead to overall improvements in cardiovascular health in under 8 weeks.[2] While the Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities recommends that federal facilities provide "protein foods from plants,"[3] a vegetarian or plant-based option is still not commonly offered at federal food facilities.[4] About 1 in 4 American workers eat and drink food obtained from their workplaces,[5] and this presents an exciting opportunity to provide federal employees and visitors with nutritious plant-based meal options. Making more nutritious options available to federal workers and visitors will improve peoples' health and lead to overall cost savings for our government, according to findings from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.[6]

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[1] https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/White-House-National-Strategy-on-Hunger-Nutrition-and-Health-FINAL.pdf
[2] https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2812392?resultClick=3
[3] https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/guidelines_for_federal_concessions_and_vending_operations.pdf
[4] https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news/2023/09/update-federal-facilities-struggle-routinely-offer-plant-based-or
[5] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6800074/
[6] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9197963/

Under your leadership, we have taken a whole-of-government approach to addressing climate change. Research indicates that dietary shifts can help us meet our climate goals, as global food systems are responsible for one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions.[7] A plant-based diet results in 75% less climate-warming emissions compared with a conventional diet, as well as less use of natural resources such as land and water use. In comparison, livestock farming is associated with larger environmental impacts, contributing to significant levels of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from land use, water use, and nitrous oxide emissions from livestock waste and heavy fertilizer usage. Offering a plant-based meal option at federal facilities can help reduce our federal government's carbon footprint while also promoting our peoples' health.

Thank you again for your commitment to ending hunger, promoting nutrition and reducing diet-related diseases by the end of this decade. This is an ambitious and exciting goal, and our federal government can lead by example through its own food practices. We urge you to work with federal agencies to make a plant-based meal option available across all federal facilities, and we stand ready to work with you on making this possible everywhere our federal government provides a meal.

Sincerely,

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
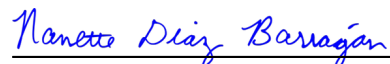Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
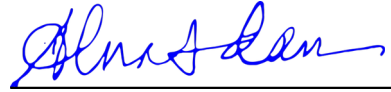Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

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[7] https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-021-00225-9

Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
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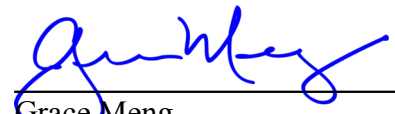Member of Congress

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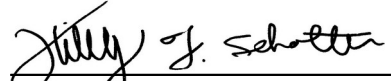
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Adriano Espaillat
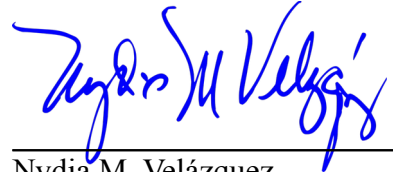Member of Congress

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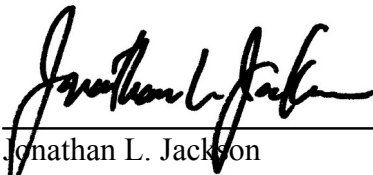Member of Congress

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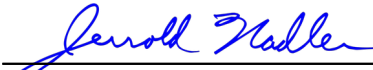
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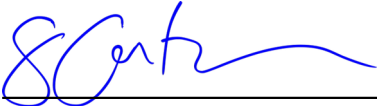
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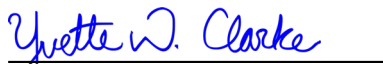
Lloyd Doggett
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Rashida Tlaib
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Yvette D. Clarke
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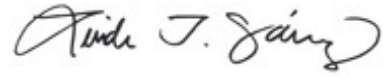Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

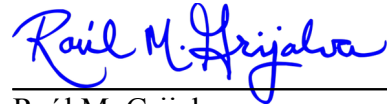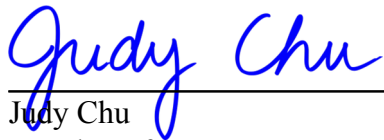Linda T. Sánchez
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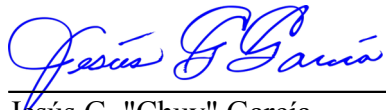
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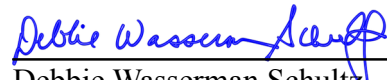Member of Congress

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