



Dear Senators Manchin and Capito,

As critical votes in the U.S. Senate you will play a decisive part in shaping the future direction of our social safety net for years to come. We thus urge you to prioritize immediate passage of the American Families Plan as laid out by the Biden administration last week.

We are a strong, grassroots coalition of West Virginia anti-poverty, anti-hunger and community food security advocates organized under the umbrella of the Food for All coalition. Over the past four years we have worked to ensure that West Virginia families are adequately resourced to access sufficient food to lead healthy lives and meaningfully contribute to the economic well-being of our state. We are social service workers, food pantry directors, doctors, educators, lawmakers, scholars, community developers, farmers and most importantly people who have firsthand experience of the violence of food insecurity and hunger.

Unfortunately significant obstacles remain for a large proportion of your constituents when it comes to securing healthy food on a regular basis. According to the U.S. Census Pulse survey, 14% of West Virginia households with children, and 10.7% of households without, did not have sufficient food in the house between April 14th and 26th of this year. This is a significant increase from the same data collected at the beginning of the pandemic on March 13th, 2020 (12.7% and 6.2% respectively), this despite significant investments in nutrition assistance programming and stimulus relief.

While the Families First, CARES, CAA and ARPA packages have all contributed relief for families facing economic precarity, the temporary nature of these interventions are insufficient, and deep structural problems that existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and contribute to the production of poverty in West Virginia, remain unaddressed.

Hunger and food insecurity are not strictly a food system issue, they are a poverty issue. As you well know, food tends to be the most elastic budget item in a household, the one that is first compromised when rent, healthcare, childcare, education, utilities bills, car repairs and other essential expenses must be prioritized. These decisions are extremely traumatic for families. We are contending with increasing rates of inflation on basic services, even as wages and earned income remain stagnant. In fact, West Virginia remains well below the national average when it comes to median household income. The American Families Plan will go a long way toward rectifying this injustice.

Every piece of the plan put forward by the Biden administration strengthens economic security for families and offers a solid social infrastructure for us to collectively build on as our state faces the coming challenges of economic restructuring in the 21st century.



It is wonderful to see the increases in nutrition assistance programming in the previous stimulus packages and in the proposed American Families Plan. However, as a coalition working to ensure that every West Virginian can secure healthy food, we understand every part of this package as a critical piece of the food access puzzle that many of our friends and neighbors continue to face.

Please do everything in your power to ensure that the American Families Plan framework is introduced and passed in the Senate prior to the next recess.

Sincerely,

Joshua Lohnes
WVU Center for Resilient Communities

Seth DiStefano
WV Center for Budget and Policy

Spencer Moss
West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition

Chad Morrision
Mountaineer Food Bank

Cyndi Kirkhardt
Facing Hunger Food Bank

Rick Wilson, Liz Brunello, Lida Shepherd
American Friends Service Committee

Jenny Anderson
Our Future WV & Families Leading Change

Kristin McCartney
WVU Extension - Family Nutrition Program

Amy Jo Hutchinson
Rattle the Windows



Impacted Constituent

Celeste Smyth

Brian Biesemeyer

Jennifer Kaizer

Elizabeth Harrison

Melissa McGilton

Brian Butcher

Jessica Belcher

LaDonna Adams

Holly Fyock

Patsy Fortney

Carey Jo Grace, Our Future WV

Darlene Lawson

Leslie Stevenson

Loretta Gandee

Laurie Allen

Annette Young

Diana Lucas

Stacy Cossin

Mary Reinbold

Christie Thomas

Matt Hill

Melissa Rakes

Sheila Alford

Jeanette Coole, WVU Extension FNP

Andrea Walker

M Schader

Ash Edwards

Amy Hutchinson

Crystal Naylor

Ab Douglass

Kathy Timmins

Valerie Woody

Janet Obryant

Patricia Marroquin

Leila Sendjak Norwood

Charlotte Haas

Lisa Jones

Charitable Food Access Agency

Mara Skidmore, Catholic Charities

Ellen Allen, Covenant House

Leah Deitz-Jackson, RCCAA

Krista Mitchell, The Pantry Plus More

Michael White, A More Excellent Way Life Center Church

Theresa Coleman, A More Excellent Way Life Center Church

Robert Haley III, A More Excellent Way Life Center Church

Denise White, A More Excellent Way Life Center Church

Debbie Ball, A More Excellent Way Life Center Church

Vicki Conner, Pantry Plus More, Inc Morgantown

Sam Yurick



Concerned Constituent

Candace Privett
Stephanie Hall
Marly Ynigues
Meredith Merriner
Kristina Patrick
P E Hedden, PNHP-WV
Barbara Steinke
Jessica Varner
Joanna DiStefano, RESULTS WV
Eric Engle, Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action
Joe Murphy, West Virginia Food and Farm
Coalition
Jacque Visyak, RESULTS
Dianne Techwei, RESULTS
Matthew Hudson
Abigail Baker
Lisa Prichard
Meg Haller
Tiffany Seldon, Amplify Children's
Academy
Angelena Milburn
Ellen Hatfield
Colleen Harshbarger
Jeffery Bowman
Jim McKay, Team for WV Children
Kimberley Shields
James Ryan
Cate Johnson
Mindy Salango
Diane Tarantini, Libera
Karla Myers
Jamie Grosier
Sarah Walkup
Maggie Beck
Debbie Naeter
George Rutherford, Jefferson Co NAACP
Yvonne Shaw
Amy Anderson
Rebekah Harlan
Amanda Ray, Morgantown NOW

April Cogle
Melissa Young, Try This
Lauren Berger
Rhonda Rogombe, WVCBP
Cody Fauber
Kelly Mueller
Betty Rivard
Crystal Good
Elise Woods
Mary Chipps, WV Community Action
Partnerships, Inc.
Kayla Morris
Julianne Yacovone
Laura Boone
Sara Johnson
John Doyle
Kim Miller, Prester Center for Mental
Health Services, Inc.
Tammy Miller, Pantry Plus More
Caitlyn Johnson, West Virginia Food and
Farm Coalition
Edith Martinez, Concord University
Rebecca Duffy
Lynda Goldberg
Lisa Esmay
Sharon Jackson
Leslie Hotaling
Sarah Barnes
Pamela Sanders
Chase Johnson
Annette Yurkovich Brichford
Abby Hall
Abigail Porter
Quenton King, WVCBP
Rachel Byrne
Catherine W Jones, RESULTS
Renee Alves, West Virginia Center on
Budget and Policy
Ellie Nesbitt
Sally Wilson, Rise Up WV



Faith Group

Rabbi Victor Urecki
Marian Keyes, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Charleston WV
Tara Rickard
Jenna Mosley Lohnes
Kristi DeLeurere
Denise Blandford

Food System Practitioner

Matthew Thompson, West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition
Tabitha Flint
Christy Eaves
Patti Miller, Grow with the Flow, LLC
Lauri A Andress, WVU School public health
Ranell Valdez, Western Greenbrier Farmers Market
Bradley Wilson, WVU Center for Resilient Communities

Healthcare and Nutritional Professional

Gina Wood, WVU Extension Service Family Nutrition Program
Regina Hallam
Jamie Jeffrey, KEYS 4 HealthyKids
Dawn Blatt
Josephine Reece, RESULTS WV
Carla Toolan, WVU Health Sciences Center East
Rebekah Aranda, WV NOW
Lisa Tuttle
Catherine Salmons
Louise Amrine
Ranjita Misra, WVU School of Public Health

Teachers and Educators

Gary Zuckett, WV Citizen Action Group
Neil Heard
Dady Dadyburjor
Margaret Tice, Jefferson County Board of
Education
Lori Blankenship
Carrie Beatty, WVEA
Gregory Der, Ritchie County Schools

John Boskovic, Bright Futures WV
Audra Slocum
Martin Ojeda
Jessica Hudson
Alanna Higgins
Sheena Buck
Selah Raines
Sarah Rouhier