

August 9, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. President,

We, the undersigned organizations, a collection of faith-based organizations whose traditions call on us to collectively address the needs of those most vulnerable, are proud to join with House Rules Committee Chairman Jim McGovern in calling for a White House Summit on Food, Nutrition, and Hunger.

Our respective scriptures inform us that all people are made in the image of the divine and as organizations guided by our faith and values, we work every day to ensure that all people are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of income or economic situation. It is far too common that those who do seek assistance are marginalized or stigmatized, so much so that even those who would otherwise qualify for such assistance refrain for fear of becoming stigmatized themselves. We also know that food insecurity is a distinct barrier for millions who struggle every day to lift themselves out of the cycle of poverty and hunger. Furthermore, we also know that addressing food insecurity is also a matter of justice because of generations of systemic bias, including systemic racism and sexism that have led to higher rates of food insecurity amongst Black, Latinx, and Native American households in the United States.

Federal programs like SNAP and WIC, which provide critical assistance to those at risk of food insecurity and respond effectively during times of heightened need, are constantly under attack. Furthermore, in this time of great economic inequality, the benefits provided by these programs do not match the current reality of need across this country. Our federal government must do more to improve and strengthen vital nutrition assistance programs to fully meet the needs of those who go hungry in this country — not undermine them and try to abdicate responsibility onto religious groups and charities.

Though the charitable food sector does an important job of providing people with direct access to food in emergency situations, we know that charity alone is not enough to end hunger in this country. During COVID-19 we saw the charitable sector stretched to the brink, while programs like SNAP were clearly vital and effective lifelines for millions of Americans. Hunger is a political problem that can only be solved with policy solutions.

We call on the Biden-Harris Administration to bring together policymakers, advocates, and those with lived experience together in a White House Conference to end hunger in America once and for all. In a country blessed with an abundance of food, no one should go hungry. We look forward to an opportunity to work together with your Administration to provide leadership for this summit and respond to the unacceptable crisis of hunger in America.

Sincerely,

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger  
Bread for the World  
Union for Reform Judaism  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC)  
Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)  
Church World Service  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Challah for Hunger  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness  
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs  
Catholic Charities USA  
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action  
The Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces  
Jewish World Watch  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
ICNA Relief  
Jewish Labor Committee  
CCT Latino Network  
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies  
Ameinu  
Islamic Relief USA  
Jewish Federation of Chicago  
Disciples Center for Public Witness  
Avodah  
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice  
Keshet