



MAJORITY MEMBERS:

VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA,
Chairwoman

JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN
GLENN GROTHMAN, WISCONSIN
ELISE M. STEFANIK, NEW YORK
RICK W. ALLEN, GEORGIA
JIM BANKS, INDIANA
JAMES COMER, KENTUCKY
LLOYD SMUCKER, PENNSYLVANIA
BURGESS OWENS, UTAH
BOB GOOD, VIRGINIA
LISA C. MCCLAIN, MICHIGAN
MARY E. MILLER, ILLINOIS
MICHELLE STEEL, CALIFORNIA
RON ESTES, KANSAS
JULIA LETLOW, LOUISIANA
KEVIN KILEY, CALIFORNIA
AARON BEAN, FLORIDA
ERIC BURLISON, MISSOURI
NATHANIEL MORAN, TEXAS
JOHN JAMES, MICHIGAN
LORI CHAVEZ-DEREMER, OREGON
BRANDON WILLIAMS, NEW YORK
ERIN HOUCHEIN, INDIANA

MINORITY MEMBERS:

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, VIRGINIA,
Ranking Member

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, ARIZONA
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLÁN,
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
FREDERICA S. WILSON, FLORIDA
SUZANNE BONAMICI, OREGON
MARK TAKANO, CALIFORNIA
ALMA S. ADAMS, NORTH CAROLINA
MARK DESAULNIER, CALIFORNIA
DONALD NORCROSS, NEW JERSEY
PRAMILA JAYAPAL, WASHINGTON
SUSAN WILD, PENNSYLVANIA
LUCY MCBATH, GEORGIA
JAHANA HAYES, CONNECTICUT
ILHAN OMAR, MINNESOTA
HALEY M. STEVENS, MICHIGAN
TERESA LEGER FERNÁNDEZ,
NEW MEXICO
KATHY E. MANNING, NORTH CAROLINA
FRANK J. MRVAN, INDIANA
JAMAAL BOWMAN, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2176 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

February 21, 2023

Ms. Allison Post
Chief, WIC Administration, Benefits, and Certification Branch
Policy Division
Food and Nutrition Service
P.O. Box 2885
Fairfax, Virginia 22031– 0885

Dear Ms. Post:

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program is intended to provide supplemental food for pregnant women, mothers, infants, and children to prevent nutrition deficiencies and ensure children have access to important nutrients. Although the proposed changes to the WIC food packages include some improvements to existing regulations, they also contain several concerning provisions.

One critical aspect of the food packages is access to milk and other dairy products. While the clear flexibility in container sizes will help participants have greater access to nutritious products such as yogurt, I am concerned that the proposed reduction in monthly milk allowances and other products will limit the effectiveness of the program. The International Dairy Foods Association estimates the proposal will reduce the amount of dairy by up to six quarts per month for pregnant participants and other participants, such as children or postpartum participants.¹ They also estimate that up to 20 percent of participants may drop out of the program with these cuts. While it is difficult to know how these changes will impact the program, these estimates demonstrate the potential harm to program participants. Money that is focused on Washington priorities instead of participants' needs is wasted money. I strongly encourage the agency to rethink these cuts and ensure that access to wholesome dairy products remains strong.

Another concern is that the proposed changes limit access to a variety of forms of fruits and vegetables. I appreciate that the proposal requires at least one other form beyond fresh of fruits and vegetables for families. However, a frozen option and canned food should be allowable for all families in all states. We know that frozen and canned food provides economical access to

¹ <https://www.idfa.org/news/20-of-wic-participants-will-drop-out-of-program-if-usda-cuts-milk-and-dairy-benefits-according-to-survey>

nutritious fruits and vegetables for families. The program should not inhibit access to such food but rather should emphasize flexibility for consumers, not Washington's priorities.

Finally, while I appreciate the work done to align the food packages to the recommendations of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine,² I must note that standards that limit participation or support for participants are not beneficial. These proposed standards limit access to nutritious food which children are willing to consume, including juice and cereal. It is critical to balance participants' likelihood to consume the allowable food with the intended nutritional benefits of the changes to the food packages. For example, limiting the amount of juice a child can drink does not correlate to the child eating more whole forms of fruits and vegetables. The WIC program needs to be flexible to accomplish its goal: helping participants obtain vital nutrients.

I am hopeful that in the final package we will see more options for families and fewer restrictions on food choices. The proposed changes will all have significant costs for families and taxpayers without clear benefits. Regulations should not increase costs to taxpayers or participants to satisfy the whims of Washington. I encourage the agency to rethink cuts to nourishing and well-liked foods that participants are willing to consume.

Sincerely,



Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce

² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. Review of WIC Food Packages: Improving Balance and Choice: Final Report. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/23655>.