



# CONGRESSWOMAN JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN

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PUERTO RICO - AT LARGE

**Remarks  
Member Day Hearing  
House Committee on Agriculture  
Tuesday, May 18, 2021. 10:00am. Via Zoom  
Nutrition Assistance in Puerto Rico**

**Thank you, Chairman Scott and Republican Leader Thompson for the opportunity to participate in today' Member Day Hearing.**

**As you know, Puerto Rico does not participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) like their counterparts in the States, DC, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Instead, it has the Nutrition Assistance Program, or NAP, which is a capped block grant typically funded at over \$1.9 billion every year and is currently serving over 1.5 million Island residents.**

**NAP is one of the top assistance programs for needy constituents on the Island. Similar to SNAP, NAP provides a monthly allotment meant to support a healthy and balanced diet. However, due to limited funding, NAP cannot automatically adjust to fluctuations in demand- including those related to emergencies- and provides less benefits to eligible participants.**

After Hurricane Maria in 2017, demand for NAP participation increased significantly. We noticed a similar pattern with the earthquakes that began in late 2018, and now with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It has become clear that NAP is one of the first programs my constituents turn to during the aftermath of an emergency or crisis. Still, the program cannot automatically accomodate sudden increases in demand and, as a result, we have had to turn to Congress on multiple occassions to secure emergency NAP funds.

Additonally, the base block grant leaves my constituents with less benefits each month. For example, a household of 1 enrolled in NAP receives a maximum of \$112, compared to a maximum monthly allotmet of \$234 in SNAP. Similarly, a household of 2 in NAP receives \$216, compared to a maximum monthly allotment of \$430 under SNAP.

While I appreciate the support of my colleagues with ensuring Puerto Rico has enouh NAP funds to cover benefits during emergency periods, true relief and proper assistance can only be achieved with a transition to SNAP. This is my goal, and my office is working closely with the Government of Puerto Rico and USDA to understand the implications of this transition and devise an appropriate plan for Puerto Rico to successfully operate SNAP. As such, I respectfully request you continue working alongside my office as we develop a path towards a viable transition to SNAP.

Lastly, I would like to convey my full support for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or WIC, which supports nearly 100,000 constituents in Puerto Rico. I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 2011, known as the WIC

**Act, which would expand eligibility and address specific gaps in nutrition assistance for postpartum women and young children.**

**Thank you and I yielded back.**