

To: Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration Appropriations Subcommittee

Date: Monday, March 23, 2026

From: The Honorable Sylvia R. Garcia (D-TX-29)

Re: Member Testimony for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration Appropriations Subcommittee Member Day

Thank you, Mr. Chair, Ranking Member, and Committee Members, for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration Appropriations Subcommittee as part of today's Member Day.

This is an important opportunity for Members of the House of Representatives to advocate for their constituents, share their priorities, and help shape the appropriations process for Fiscal Year 2027.

Over the last several years, Congress has taken decisive action to ensure that Congress and all levels of government better support all communities across our nation, especially rural and underprivileged communities.

The Subcommittee should build on this critical work by ensuring that the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2027 continues to fund nutrition programs and rural development projects to the fullest extent possible.

Specifically, I urge the Subcommittee to continue investing in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The program invests set-asides in technology modernization while protecting WIC's evidence-based food package. I urge the

inclusion of emergency funding to continue the program, should participation or food costs exceed projections.

I also support funding the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program. The program provides low-income women and children with locally grown, nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables. Funding this program will permit participating states to expand access. The program not only addresses food insecurity and supports our nation's rural agricultural communities by stimulating economic activity and creating jobs, but it also fights food deserts and supports underserved communities.

Child nutrition programs overseen by the Agricultural Department help feed our nation's next generation. The Department of Agriculture has multiple programs that must be invested in to ensure the health and success of our children. These programs include the National School Lunch Program and the Farm to School Grant Program.

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential childcare institutions, and provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free lunches to children each school day. The School Breakfast Program provides reimbursement to states to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential childcare institutions.

The Department of Agriculture has historically administered the Farm to School Grant Program to support schools, school districts, and community partners in establishing and expanding farm to school activities. These activities include developing procurement practices, building

relationships with local producers, and integrating locally sourced foods into school meal programs. Providing increased general funding will allow the Department to award additional grants and support continued participation in farm-to-school initiatives serving students nationwide. That is why I urge total funding level of \$18 million in funding for this necessary program.

The program also requires adequate administrative resources to support grant distribution, provide technical assistance to grantees, and oversee program implementation. Sufficient administrative capacity will enable the Food and Nutrition Service to carry out program responsibilities and maintain oversight of federal funds.

This Subcommittee has the important role of supporting our nation through nutrition and agricultural services through programs like the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. For two decades, McGovern-Dole has promoted education, child development and food security for some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable children. It provides donations of US agricultural commodities and financial and technical assistance for school feeding and maternal and child nutrition projects in low-income countries and has benefited over 44 million children in 40 countries. Over the years, the program has been rigorously evaluated and has made significant improvements in program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Few programs deliver so much for such a minimal investment. It merits robust funding and continuing support. That is why I urge total funding level of \$265 million and, if possible, an increase in funding for this necessary program.

Finally, I request the inclusion of report language that supports the efforts of the Food and Drug Administration to continue outreach and engagement with healthcare providers and researchers on perimenopause, menopause, and mid-life women's health. The report language should also support the agency's oversight and consumer protection activities to assess the safety and effectiveness of new diagnostic tools for menopausal symptoms, including emerging technologies such as devices that incorporate artificial intelligence. Strengthening these efforts will help ensure continued evaluation of available tools and promote informed engagement among providers, researchers, and patients.

This Subcommittee helps our nation's most vulnerable, whether they are children, mothers, families, or small businesses like our farmers. We must continue to invest in programs that help support our underserved communities across the nation.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share these priorities for your consideration, and I encourage all members of the subcommittee to work with me to get this done.

Thank you.