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November 8, 2017

The Honorable David J. Shulkin
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue Northwest
Washington DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shulkin,

We applaud the efforts of the *Ensuring Veteran Food Security Workgroup* that convenes expert staff from the United States Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Defense (DOD), and the Veterans Administration (VA) to implement VA-wide food insecurity screenings, beginning on November 1, 2017. This significant step will help identify veterans that face hunger, provide an opportunity to connect them to appropriate nutritional support programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and aid those who have served our country in their time of need.

The data created through these screening questions may also provide significant insight for policymakers as we seek to better understand the prevalence and extent of food insecurity among veterans who may struggle to put nutritious food on the table. Therefore, we ask that the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs build upon the success of the [recent announcement](#) to implement food insecurity screenings for veterans seeking assistance at VA facilities and share this information with policy makers, Agency partners, and the non-profit community as we seek solutions to end hunger for our Nation's veterans.

Sadly, some veterans who have risked their lives for the freedom and safety of our country face high rates of disability, significant medical problems, and mental health conditions that may complicate their ability to maintain gainful employment. These men and women are also at greater risk for food insecurity. In fact, [a study from the University of Minnesota](#) demonstrated that veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars suffer from food insecurity at rates more than twice the national average.

The VA estimates that at least two million veterans will be surveyed in the first year in which the screening tool is implemented and within two years, all veterans will be assessed regarding their food security status. We ask that you provide a report on the status of veteran food security and hunger to relevant House and Senate oversight committees by November of 2018, along with recommendations about further actions that could be taken to assist veterans who are determined to be food insecure, including pilot programs to test the feasibility of SNAP enrollment and applications assistance by VA personnel. It is imperative that Members of Congress are briefed by the Administration the progress of this screening tool as well as VA programs and personnel efforts to connect those in need to SNAP and other social services.

We look forward to working with you, the staff of the VA, and partner Agencies as you work to eliminate the scourge of hunger faced by our country's veterans and learning how we may support those efforts.

Sincerely,



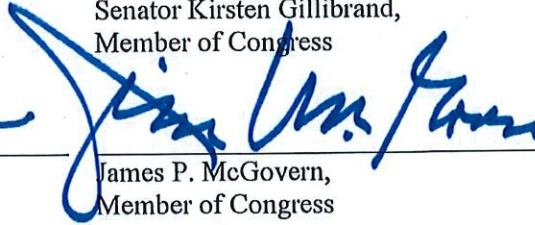
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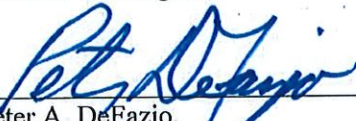
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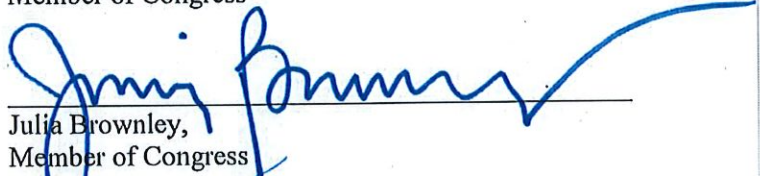
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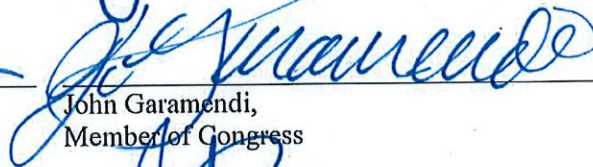
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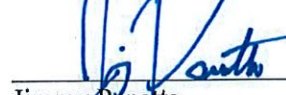
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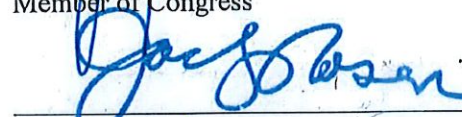
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