

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Bennett  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

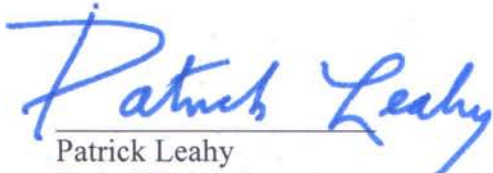
The Honorable Herb Kohl  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Bennett and Senator Kohl:

As childhood obesity rates climb and small- and medium-sized farms struggle to find profitable markets, communities all across our nation are beginning to explore the benefits of linking local farms and school cafeterias. When these connections are made, children receive healthful, fresh food choices at school and positive, hands-on educational experiences about the foods that are produced in their region. At the same time, farmers not only strengthen their local markets, but become more involved with the schools in their community. Often those interested in making farm-to-cafeteria connections are small schools that do not have the staff or money to initiate a project on their own. With a small amount of seed money and some technical assistance, schools can create programs that excite children about good eating habits and nutrition, show them the importance of agriculture, and supports local farms by keeping food dollars within the community.

Section 122 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 authorized USDA to provide one-time grants of up to \$100,000 to eligible community organizations working to get school and farm partnerships off the ground. These funds could be used for activities such as the purchase of adequate equipment to store and prepare fresh foods, the development of vendor relationships with nearby farmers, the planning of seasonal menus and promotional materials, and the development of hands-on nutrition education related to agriculture. Providing one-time-only startup funding has worked very well for other programs, and has proven to produce significant, lasting positive change in communities. It often maximizes benefits for years to come because such funding helps create programs that continue without federal assistance.

To help communities across the nation build successful school and farm partnerships, we respectfully request that Section 122 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 be funded at \$5 million for Fiscal Year 2007. We are pleased to have the support of the attached national, regional and local food and farm organizations across the country and we look forward to working with you on behalf of this important initiative.



Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator

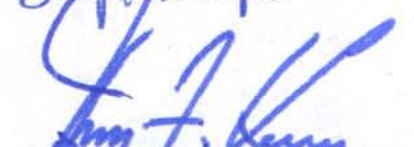
Sincerely,



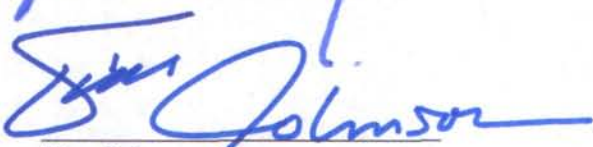
Arlen Specter  
United States Senator



Jeff Bingaman  
United States Senator



John Kerry  
United States Senator



Tim Johnson  
United States Senator



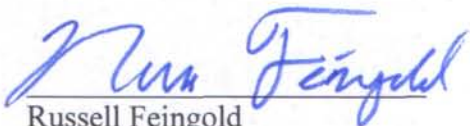
James Jeffords  
United States Senator



Carl Levin  
United States Senator



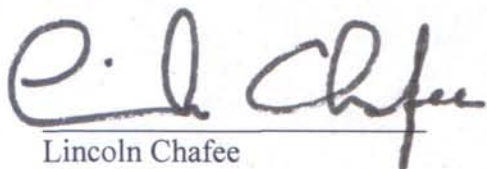
Mark Dayton  
United States Senator



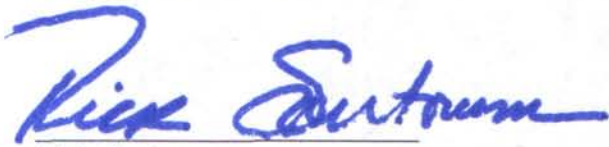
Russell Feingold  
United States Senator



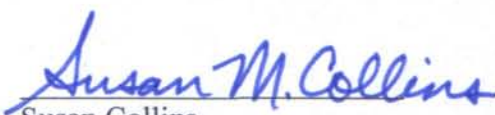
Mike DeWine  
United States Senator




Lincoln Chafee  
United States Senator




Rick Santorum  
United States Senator



Susan Collins  
United States Senator



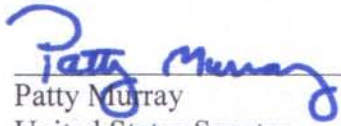
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator




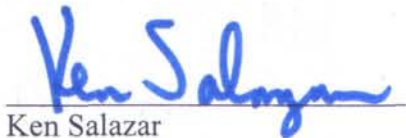
Jack Reed  
United States Senator




Hillary Clinton  
United States Senator

  
Patty Murray  
United States Senator

  
Blanche Lincoln  
United States Senator

  
Ken Salazar  
United States Senator

  
Chris Dodd  
United States Senator