



STATE OF ARKANSAS
SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS
GOVERNOR

December 10, 2024

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary-Designate
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20201

Brooke Rollins
Secretary-Designate
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Kennedy and Mrs. Rollins,

As you know, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a \$113 billion federal program designed to support low-income families with food assistance. Unfortunately, this "Nutrition Assistance" program is undermining the health of millions of Americans, on the taxpayer's dime, by encouraging families to eat highly processed, unhealthy junk food.

In fact, soda, unhealthy snacks, candy, and dessert account for nearly 23 percent, or \$25 billion, of all SNAP purchases. Given the relationship between junk food and poor health, our federal food assistance policies are fueling obesity, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and a wide range of chronic health conditions across America.

As a mom of three, I have made improving maternal health outcomes one of my key priorities as governor. But we will never address our maternal health challenges unless we tackle chronic health conditions, like diabetes and obesity, that dramatically increase the risk of pregnancy complications. For example, one-third of our state has diabetes or pre-diabetes. Forty percent of our state struggles with obesity. Sadly, these health conditions disproportionately affect lower-income families — the same people who rely on SNAP for food.



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Dr. Jay Bhattacharya and his Stanford colleagues estimated that prohibiting sugary drinks and soda from SNAP would prevent obesity in 141,000 kids and Type 2 diabetes in 240,000 adults. Since joint state and federal healthcare spending is quickly approaching \$2 trillion each year, we should embrace commonsense, preventative healthcare policies.

Health-centered SNAP reform also offers a great opportunity for Americans to support Arkansas farmers by enjoying Arkansas-grown and harvested poultry, eggs, beef, pecans, peanuts, soy, strawberries, sweet potatoes, rice, peaches, oats, and more. As someone who believes in the Trump Administration's unifying, aspirational vision for the future, the time has come to support American farmers and end taxpayer-funded junk food.

As Secretaries, I ask that you work collaboratively across the Administration to prohibit the sale of junk food in SNAP and end taxpayer-funded junk food. I also wish to notify you of my intent to pursue a SNAP Waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service that would support fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, and protein and prohibit using SNAP for junk food.

Together, we can, and we will, Make America Healthy Again.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, reading "Sarah Sanders".

Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor of Arkansas