



Office of the Secretary
Washington, DC 20250

September 15, 2022

THE HONORABLE GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1010 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Thompson:

Thank you for your letter regarding President Biden's Executive Order (EO) on Promoting Access to Voting, E.O. 14019 and the actions of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement the EO.

USDA is committed to enabling Americans to participate in our democracy by promoting the right to vote and non-partisan and non-campaign election information, among voting-age program participants and their families where authorized. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is the Federal agency that administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). In accordance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA), P.L. 103-31, State SNAP and WIC agencies are required, unless exempted, to provide voter registration services.

The NVRA requires SNAP and WIC State agencies to offer voter registration opportunities to any person who applies for or renews an application for public assistance, which includes the acceptance of the completed voter registration form and transmittal to State election officials. Section 7(b) of the NVRA ((52 U.S.C. 20506(b)) requires that all Federal agencies "to the greatest extent practicable, cooperate with the States in carrying out" their responsibilities under the NVRA. In addition, Section 1(b) of Executive Order 12926, "Implementation of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993," (59 FR 47227, September 14, 1994) requires all Federal agencies to assist State agencies "with the costs of implementation of the [NVRA], consistent with legal authority and the availability of funds." FNS therefore has an obligation to assist States with the implementation of the NVRA, including Federal assistance with State NVRA costs, where practicable and consistent with legal authority.

As it currently stands, while the Department has moved forward with strategic planning called for by the Executive Order, the Department has not estimated the amount of funding needed to implement plans in response to it. USDA has not solicited or facilitated approved third-party organizations or State Officials to provide voter registration on USDA premises. FNS is not aware of any requested assistance from State agencies for voter registration from USDA. USDA is always vigilant about ensuring its employees comply with the Hatch Act and our ethics officers offer regular training on such matters.

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I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions about this response, please have a member of your staff contact the Office of External and Governmental Affairs at (202) 720-7095.

Sincerely,



THOMAS J. VILSACK
Secretary