

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 26, 2026

The Honorable Kari Armijo
Secretary
New Mexico Health Care Authority
1474 Rodeo Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Secretary Armijo:

I write to you following the release of the Legislative Finance Committee's (LFC) report on New Mexico's administration of its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Under H.R. 1 (P.L. 119-21), the New Mexico Health Care Authority (HCA) needs to significantly reduce its payment error rate for SNAP to prevent our state from losing up to \$173 million in federal funding annually.¹ Necessary steps include increasing oversight and training of staff and leveraging technology to enhance data verification. HCA must take lowering the SNAP error rate seriously to protect this vital program for New Mexicans struggling to put food on the table and guard the state's budget from harmful impacts.

One year ago, the Republican-controlled Congress passed H.R. 1, which implemented drastic cuts to programs such as Medicaid and SNAP to fund tax cuts for American billionaires. This harmful legislation instituted more red tape for working families and increased paperwork requirements for veterans to cut SNAP benefits. This law also incorrectly correlates error rates with fraud rates. While these two rates are not interchangeable, the law includes provisions that will shift the cost burden for SNAP onto states with high error rates, like New Mexico.

I strongly opposed the food assistance cuts in H.R. 1 and their impacts on New Mexicans. At the same time, the state also has a duty to be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars and lower its error rate. HCA's SNAP error rate has continued to climb over the past decade, reaching a high of 16.81 percent, outpacing the national average, and ranking our state as the third highest error rate in the country.² These errors primarily include miscalculations and payments based on outdated information, the majority of which can be addressed by the state to ensure the accuracy of SNAP payments. When New Mexicans pay their taxes, they deserve to know that their hard-earned dollars are being spent responsibly, lawfully, and for the good of the public. We must do better to maintain the public's trust in government.

As noted in the LFC report, many reasonable steps can be taken to strengthen this program and protect SNAP beneficiaries across our state. If HCA cannot make these process corrections over the next three fiscal years, the cost-share provisions under H.R. 1 will create a massive \$173 million dollar-hole in the state's budget, and as the LFC report noted, "every dollar the state has to use to replace lost federal SNAP revenue is a dollar that can no longer be used for... education, healthcare, public safety, or economic development."³

¹ Legislative Finance Committee, *Program Evaluation: SNAP Administration and Performance* (June 16, 2026), Report Summary.

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Quality Control Payment Error Rates, Fiscal Year 2025*, <https://fna-bwbufwdzbabpezgc.z01.azurefd.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-qcfy25-per.pdf> (accessed June 24, 2026).

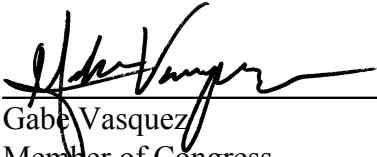
³ Legislative Finance Committee, *Program Evaluation: SNAP Administration and Performance* (June 16, 2026), pp. 16.

Many of the changes that the LFC recommended are common sense, and I appreciate your June 10 letter acknowledging support for many of the recommended improvements. For example, HCA can take steps to improve computational errors and improve consistency across field offices.⁴ Similarly, caseworker processing errors and implementation of secondary data verification methods could have a significant impact on lowering the state's error rate by verifying self-reported information.⁵ I strongly encourage HCA to prioritize staff training, consistency, and best practices to improve the accuracy of approved benefits.

New Mexico must do everything possible to protect and properly allocate taxpayer dollars while supporting SNAP recipients. As the report makes clear, these improvements can be implemented while also continuing to recognize the important role SNAP plays in our state, our communities, and our economy. Given the timeline provided by H.R. 1, I am committed to working with the state to increase caseworker training, provide support for better technology, and improve data efficiency in benefit approval.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to working together to strengthen SNAP administration and protect this vital program for New Mexico families.

Sincerely,



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor of New Mexico

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 19–20

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 21.