

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0309

February 5, 2026

The Honorable Donald Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

Despite your repeated claims that when “you look at groceries, it’s all down”,¹ a year into your second term grocery prices remain high. In fact, December 2025 saw the biggest month-to-month jump in food prices since October 2022.² You campaigned on a promise to lower costs for Americans, but little progress has been made—hardworking families in Arizona and across the nation still face high prices at the checkout line. Polling indicates that more than 50 percent of Americans overall and 65 percent of people making under \$50,000 say the cost of groceries are a major source of stress.³

While you have acknowledged the need to lower food prices in your executive order entitled “Delivering Emergency Price Relief for American Families and Defeating the Cost-of-Living Crisis,” you failed to include concrete steps to deliver price relief to the American people. Keeping food affordable and ensuring Americans have access to the assistance they need is good for families, farmers, workers, and small businesses. To bring down these continued high food costs, I encourage you to take the following steps:

Trade

Since the start of your second term, you have imposed a wide range of tariffs on imports from every single one of the United States’s trading partners, most notably on Mexico, Canada, China, India, Brazil, and the European Union. These tariff rates start at 10 percent and rise to 50 percent, with higher rates threatened. They impact nearly every product entering the United States, including produce, meat, dairy, and canned goods. When used in a smart way, tariffs can be an important tool that create American jobs and strengthen American manufacturing, which reduces costs by creating reliable domestic supply chains. However, your Administration’s reckless approach is creating chaos - making it impossible for companies to plan long-term domestic investments and instead are solely serving as a tax on working families and business, increasing costs when people are already struggling. In addition to raising costs, your policies have led to retaliatory tariffs that hurt local agricultural producers, like the Arizona dairymen I met with in Tempe last year, putting American jobs at risk.

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2026/01/28/politics/fact-check-trump-democrats-affordability>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/13/business/economy/inflation-cpi-report-food-prices.html>

³ <https://apnorc.org/projects/most-say-their-financial-situation-is-holding-steady-but-its-tenuous/>

Additionally, on July 14, 2025, the Department of Commerce announced the U.S. would withdraw from the 2019 Suspension Agreement of Fresh Tomatoes from Mexico (TSA) resulting in a 17.09 percent tariff on imports of most fresh Mexican tomatoes. Since 2018, more than 90 percent of the fresh tomatoes entering the United States have been imported from Mexico; in 2024, Mexican tomato imports generated more than \$3.6 billion in direct economic impact to the U.S. economy.⁴ Terminating the TSA will not address the core factors impacting domestic tomato growers; rather, this decision just increases U.S. retail prices for tomatoes⁵ and threatens nearly 50,000 jobs in Arizona alone.⁶ I urge you to immediately reinstate the Tomato Suspension Agreement and rescind your universal tariffs on agricultural items in order to protect consumers and lower food prices. We need strategic trade policies that lower costs, strengthen our economy, and support American jobs—not ones that make life more expensive.

Corporate Price Fixing

Even as inflation takes its toll on American families, many large food and grocery corporations continue to report high profit levels. In the last 25 years, the most dominant food and agribusiness companies have been fined over \$2 billion for price-fixing and other anti-competitive practices.⁷

Large food companies are not being held accountable for anti-competitive behavior. When they do receive fines, these penalties are often not enough to deter predatory practices. To ensure wealthy corporations are not artificially hiking prices and causing undue harm on buyers, we must strengthen antitrust enforcement and the penalties corporations face when they engage in these practices. I encourage you to direct the Department of Justice and the FTC to aggressively investigate and prosecute corporations that engage in price-fixing, market manipulation, or other anti-competitive behavior.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP allows hardworking Americans, who would otherwise struggle to, put food on the table. They're especially critical at times when food costs are so high. The monthly benefits are already too low in many places. With sustained price inflation averaging 2 percent in 2025,⁸ a modestly priced meal costs 20 percent more than the maximum SNAP benefit provides.⁹ While American families are already struggling to afford their grocery bills, your One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) makes steep cuts to the food assistance programs that help them stay afloat. Furthermore, this bill included additional paperwork and red tape in the name of "work

⁴ <https://agecoext.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025.02.Update-Estimated-Impact-Analysis-of-Mexican-Tomatoes-Imported-by-the-United-States.pdf>

⁵ <https://agecoext.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025.02.Update-Estimated-Impact-Analysis-of-Mexican-Tomatoes-Imported-by-the-United-States.pdf>

⁶ <https://agecoext.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025.02.Update-Estimated-Impact-Analysis-of-Mexican-Tomatoes-Imported-by-the-United-States.pdf>

⁷ Center for Responsible Food Business. "The Hidden Costs in Your Grocery Bill: How Price Fixing Hurts Consumers." <https://www.responsiblefoodbusiness.org/insights/the-hidden-costs-in-your-grocery-bill#:~:text=Big%20Fines%2C%20Bigger%20Profits,error%20for%20these%20massive%20corporations.>

⁸ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Consumer prices rose 2.4 percent over the last year; food prices up 2.9 percent." 18 June 2025. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2025/consumer-prices-rose-2-4-percent-over-the-year-food-prices-up-2-9-percent.htm?>

⁹ Urban Institute. "Does SNAP Cover the Cost of a Meal in Your County?" 16 July 2025. <https://www.urban.org/data-tools/does-snap-cover-cost-meal-your-county>

requirements” that will only serve to throw people off these programs. Data show these requirements do not put more people in the workforce, but instead leave more kids and families hungry.¹⁰ More than 900,000 Arizonans receive SNAP benefits, almost half of whom could see a reduction in their benefits under the new changes.

Approximately 4 million people will lose some or all of their SNAP food benefits once the OBBBA changes are fully enacted, not only straining household budgets and increasing food insecurity, but removing billions in purchasing power from the market. Nearly 80 percent of SNAP dollars are spent at traditional grocery stores, which means that SNAP funding impacts not only those who receive the program’s assistance, but also store employees, suppliers, farmers, and local communities. SNAP cuts reduce sales and negatively impact small, independent grocery stores and stores in low-income and rural areas, which can result in reduced demand from wholesalers and farmers, leading to a domino effect of job losses across the food supply chain.

I urge you to reverse these harmful changes to the SNAP program in order to ease the burden of high food costs for hardworking Americans and protect local communities from damaging economic consequences.

Food Supply and Production

Your tariff policies have also drastically increased the price of essential farming inputs like fertilizer. According to the World Bank, fertilizer prices are still averaging about 20 percent more than prices a year ago.¹¹ Meanwhile, sweeping federal workforce cuts at the Department of Agriculture (USDA) have disrupted critical research programs and grant funding opportunities. USDA has lost at least 18,000 employees since January 2025 because of illegal reduction-in-force efforts and shortsighted deferred resignation programs, leaving fewer staff available to oversee agricultural research on the ground and manage inspection programs.¹² These research programs are essential for driving innovation on high-yield crops, disease-resistant livestock, and better farming techniques.

Additionally, farmers operating on narrow profit margins now face steeper production prices and reduced purchasing power because of the rising costs of farming inputs such as fertilizer, food, and equipment, further driving up the cost of food. To counter this crisis, I urge you to restore funding for critical USDA research programs and grants for food purchasing programs, including the Local Food for Schools (LFS) Cooperative Agreement Program for schools and the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Cooperative Agreement Program to support food banks.

Arizona families cannot continue to bear the cost of rising food prices. I encourage you to take swift action and work with us to lower the price of food for American families. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

¹⁰ <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20200561>;

<https://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20260105/Division%20C%20Interior.pdf>

¹¹ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/fertilizer-markets-soften-but-remain-constrained-by-trade-polici#:~:text=Here%20are%20some%20fertilizer%20price%20forecasts%20for,and%202027%20as%20new%20capacity%20comes%20online>

¹² Environment.org, “USDA Staffing Crisis: Mass Departures Undermine Local Ag Support.” 28 August 2025.

<https://environment.org/usda-staffing-crisis-mass-departures-undermine-local-ag-support/>?

Sincerely,

Mark Kelly

Mark Kelly
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Brooke Rollins, Secretary of Agriculture

CC: The Honorable Jameison Greer, United States Trade Representative