



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

September 27, 2011

Secretary Dennis Smith
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
1 West Wilson Street
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Secretary Smith,

We urge the Department of Health Services (DHS) to reconsider its decision to not seek federal funding available to implement an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system for the state's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and its beneficiaries.

WIC is the nation's premier public health nutrition program that promotes and maintains the health and well-being of low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to children up to age five. WIC provides supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition and breastfeeding information, and referral to other health and nutrition services to over 120,000 people in Wisconsin. Further, the program injects over \$83 million into the Wisconsin retail community annually, as WIC benefits are spent at over 1,000 authorized grocery stores and pharmacies across the state.

In order to eliminate unintentional abuse, decrease intentional program fraud, and improve the state's ability to sanction, convict, and recover funds, a federal mandate provides that all states must move to an EBT system by 2020. It is our understanding that federal funding for EBT implementation is available to Wisconsin, but that DHS has yet to seek this funding due to a variety of reasons.

While we are aware that you contend that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) must work out a number of issues before implementing EBT, we believe that failing to seek federal funding would be a significant setback for implementing this important program. **In turn, we urge you to reconsider your position and request that you apply for USDA funding to help Wisconsin move forward on EBT implementation.** Time is of the essence in order to ensure that we secure available funding to make this vital program more efficient and less apt to fraud. This will not only benefit those who utilize this program, but also taxpayers and retailers across the state.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and sincerely hope that you will reverse your position on this matter.

Sincerely,

Sandy Pasch
State Representative
22nd Assembly District

Chris Larson
State Senator
7th Senate District

Jon Richards
State Representative
19th Assembly District

Gordon Hintz
State Representative
54th Assembly District

Elizabeth Cogs
State Representative
10th Assembly District

Lena C. Taylor
State Senator
4th Senate District

Christine Sinicki
State Representative
20th Assembly District

Jim Holperin
State Senator
12th Senate District

Penny Bernard Schaber
State Representative
57th Assembly District

Janet Bewley
State Representative
74th Assembly District

Jason Fields
State Representative
11th Assembly District

Cory Mason
State Representative
62nd Assembly District

Chris Taylor
State Representative
48th Assembly District

Tamara Grigsby
State Representative
18th Assembly District

Robert Turner
State Representative
61st Assembly District

Josh Zepnick
State Representative
9th Assembly District

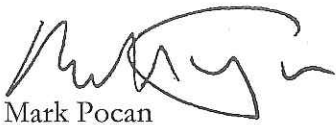
Leon Young
State Representative
16th Assembly District

Gary Hebl
State Representative
46th Assembly District

Janis Ringhand
State Representative
80th Assembly District

Kelda Roys
State Representative
81st Assembly District

Andy Jorgensen
State Representative
37th Assembly District



Mark Pocan
State Representative
78th Assembly District



Frederick Kessler
State Representative
12th Assembly District



Louis Molepske, Jr.
State Representative
71st Assembly District



Robert Wirch
State Senator
22nd Senate District



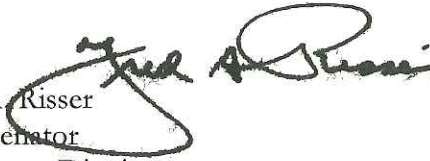
Dave Hansen
State Senator
30th Senate District



Barbara Toles
State Representative
17th Assembly District



Jennifer Shilling
State Senator
32nd Senate District



Fred A. Risser
State Senator
26th Senate District