



## Advocating for Food Security: Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren's Visit to Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County

September 11, 2023 by [Dawn](#)

In an encouraging display of dedication to her constituents, Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren recently paid a visit to Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County. Her mission? To listen to the personal stories of struggling community members and to discuss the pressing issues surrounding CalFresh (SNAP) benefits, WIC funding, and the potential threat of a government shutdown.

### **CalFresh Benefits and the Fight for Full Funding**

The reduction of emergency pandemic CalFresh allotments on March 26th hit hard for many families. Even before the pandemic, the pre-existing rates were insufficient to support nutritional choices. With inflation exacerbating their struggles, constituents shared their concerns with Rep. Lofgren. They wondered how they would manage rent, food, transportation, and healthcare costs if a government shutdown were to occur. Rep. Lofgren empathized with their plight and emphasized that "SNAP [CalFresh] is a very good investment in America, with measurable outcomes" aiming to secure full funding without additional work restrictions previously accepted in debt ceiling agreement.

### **WIC Funding and the Well-being of Pregnant Women**

Another crucial topic discussed was the jeopardy faced by the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program in the event of a government shutdown. Rep. Lofgren stressed the importance of WIC, citing data showing that pregnant women with access to

better nutrition give birth to healthier children. While Democrats seek \$1.4 billion in funding, the GOP's proposed \$8.5 million cut threatens to strain organizations like Second Harvest Food Bank, which already serves over 104,000 women in California.

### **The Urgent Need for Support and Community Solidarity**

CEO Erica Padilla-Chavez highlighted the precarious situation at Second Harvest Food Bank. Shrinking USDA distributions and increased demand due to rising rents and inflation have left their shelves empty. Community support is essential, and Padilla-Chavez urged for assistance from TEFAP.

### **A Commitment to Advocacy**

Congresswoman Lofgren assured constituents that she and her fellow Members of Congress are committed to preventing a government shutdown. They will work towards a continuing resolution to maintain funding while negotiating bills, including the Farm Bill, Ag bill, and Defense funding. Lofgren vowed not to abandon the American people in their time of need.

Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren's visit to Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County showcased her dedication to her constituents and her commitment to fighting for food security and the well-being of vulnerable populations. It's a testament to the power of community engagement and advocacy in times of uncertainty. Together, we can make a difference and ensure that no one goes hungry in our communities.

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