



NEW YORK STATE SENATE

ALBANY, NY 12247

ALESSANDRA R. BIAGGI  
SENATOR

January 29, 2021

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
Executive Chamber  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

Dr. Howard A. Zucker  
Commissioner  
New York State Department of Health  
Corning Tower  
Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker,

Thank you for your continued efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and your work to begin vaccinating New Yorkers. While many essential workers are provided for within the distribution plan, one key class of workers has been omitted: the workers and volunteers who run food banks and pantries.

Emergency food services have been a lifeline for many New Yorkers over the last ten months. The workers and volunteers who run food banks provide essential services to communities across our state. These individuals have sacrificed their time and risked exposure to COVID-19 to provide food to communities in extreme need. Food bank and pantry workers who interact with the public must be included in the vaccine distribution plan as (1) they provide the essential function of distributing food, and (2) they serve the most vulnerable communities in our state.

The current vaccine distribution plan rightfully recognizes the essential nature of food distribution and includes grocery store workers in Phase 1B. This same courtesy should be extended to food bank and pantry workers who provide similar essential services to those in greatest need. Moreover, food banks serve communities that have been especially hard hit by COVID-19 — elderly New Yorkers and New Yorkers of color. And many workers and volunteers come from these same communities. Vaccinating these workers is vital to their safety — and the safety of those they serve.

We appreciate the efforts your administration has made to protect the health and food security of all New Yorkers. In alignment with these goals, we urge you to consider adding public-facing food bank and pantry workers to Phase 1B of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan, as these workers provide the essential function of distributing food.

With Gratitude,



Alessandra Biaggi  
New York State Senator, District 34



Jabari Brisport  
New York State Senator, District 25



Samra Brouk  
New York State Senator, District 55



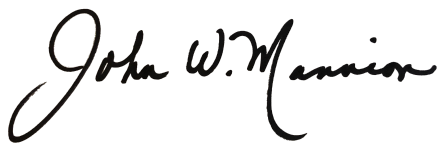
Robert Jackson  
New York State Senator, District 31



Todd Kaminsky  
New York State Senator, District 9



Brian Kavanagh  
New York State Senator, District 26



John W. Mannion  
New York State Senator, District 50



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New York State Senator, District 20



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