Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This letter is to express my concern related to policies that contribute to child hunger. As you consider Medicaid cuts and cuts to the safety net programs like SNAP, school lunch or WIC, please think about the effect on children.

A child’s brain is actively growing during pregnancy and continues for the first 3 years of life. When there is inadequate nutrition, the human brain does not reach its full potential. This ultimately results in the need for special education programs which significantly increase the cost of education as well as decrease the potential of U.S. children.

When a family no longer has food support, they are unable to find other places to cut spending as housing costs continue to rise and in the NorthEast heating costs are also an issue. The only thing left for a family to cut is food. Did you know that over half (58%) of the families that use SNAP also need to visit food pantries, suggesting that current benefits do not go far enough. Food pantries used to be used for emergencies but now food pantries are a supplemental source of food. There has been a 46% increase in food bank usage since 2006.

A family without inadequate food results in a hungry, food insecure child, In the U.S., there are 13.1 million food insecure children and 14.5 million live in poverty (20%)(Hunger in America 2014). When there is discussion of cutting Medicaid, it is important to remember that 48% of those receiving Medicaid are children.

Currently, there are 58,000 pantries, meal service programs and other charitable food programs. Of these, 62% are faith based initiatives and the remainder are mainly government agency sponsored. They serve 46.5 million people/year, 12 million are children. This is 1 in 7 Americans who rely on charitable food programs.

Please consider all of the above when you vote on bills that effect child nutrition. Is it time for us to consider child nutrition a priority as in done in other developed countries?

Sincerely yours,