

JON RUNYAN
3RD DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ASSISTANCE
AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH



COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE,
OCEANS AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3003

January 25, 2012

Congressman Darrell Issa
Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Issa,

I would like to request the Committee's attention to a matter which has come to light in my district regarding potential fraud in the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program. (D-SNAP).

Hurricane Irene caused severe damage throughout the state of New Jersey, including my Congressional District. In the wake of Hurricane Irene, Governor Christie correctly requested a federal disaster declaration for the entire state. That request was eventually granted and much needed aid continues to be delivered to those truly in need after the storm.

However, I and many local officials in my district are concerned about the implementation of federal emergency food aid in the wake of Irene. Specifically, the Burlington County Freeholders in my district have raised concerns regarding the D-SNAP program.

According to a letter from Freeholder Director Bruce D. Garganio:

In the aftermath of Hurricane Irene, the Burlington County Board of Social Services received nearly 3,200 D-SNAP applications, seeking food stamp assistance ranging from \$650 to a maximum of \$1,200. However, the agency reported that many of these claims – more than half – were highly suspect, since they came from an area of [Burlington] County that did not sustain serious flood damage... However, by federal mandate, County agencies cannot not require or compel applicants to validate their flood-related losses, thus creating an opportunity for fraud, much to the detriment of Hurricane victims who were rightfully entitled to these benefits, not to mention taxpayers who foot the bill. (Letter attached)

I agree with the assertion in this letter that potential fraud in the D-SNAP program is detrimental to those victims who truly did sustain severe damage from the hurricane. I also agree that fraud in D-SNAP is a problem for the taxpayers who are paying for this program.

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4167 CHURCH ROAD
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(856) 780-6440 (FAX)

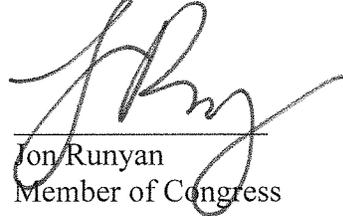
WASHINGTON, D.C.
1239 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4765
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Runyan.House.Gov

OCEAN COUNTY
600 MULE ROAD, UNIT 6
TOMS RIVER, NJ 08757
(732) 279-6013
(732) 279-6062 (FAX)

I understand that the administration of this program may have speed bumps, but fraud is unacceptable. It is my hope that the Committee investigate the claims that the Freeholders are making, and consider holding a hearing on this important matter. Your staff may contact Joe Heaton (joe.heaton@mail.house.gov) at 202-225-4765 in my office if we can be of additional assistance.

Sincerely,



Jon Runyan
Member of Congress

Board of Chosen Freeholders
County of Burlington



OFFICE OF THE
BURLINGTON COUNTY FREEHOLDERS

Bruce D. Garganio
Leah Arter
Joseph B. Donnelly
Joseph Howarth
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Paul Drayton
County Administrator /
Board Clerk
609-265-5020
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January 25, 2012

The Honorable Jon Runyan
Member of Congress
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Disaster Supplemental Nutrition
Assistance Program (D-SNAP)

Dear Congressman Runyan:

On behalf of the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, I am writing to bring your attention to the D-SNAP program, and the need to ensure that this assistance program is not subject to fraudulent claims in the future.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Irene, the Burlington County Board of Social Services received nearly 3,200 D-SNAP applications, seeking food stamp assistance ranging from \$650 to a maximum of \$1,200. However, the agency reported that many of these claims – more than half – were highly suspect, since they came from an area of our County that did not sustain serious flood damage.

Burlington County was not alone. Other jurisdictions both within and outside of New Jersey reported hundreds, if not thousands, of cases of suspected fraud, as a result of Irene.

However, by federal mandate, County agencies cannot not require or compel applicants to validate their flood-related losses, thus creating an opportunity for fraud, much to the detriment of Hurricane victims who were rightfully entitled to these benefits, not to mention taxpayers who foot the bill.

While the Freeholders believe that this may be addressed administratively, and have adopted a resolution (copy enclosed) calling on the President to take necessary safeguards, it is apparent that this is still an outstanding issue which, in our opinion, must be addressed before the next "disaster" and scam occurs.

The Honorable Jon Runyan
January 25, 2012
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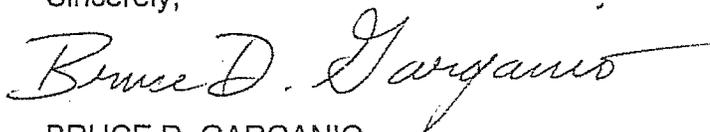
Most recently, Commissioner Jennifer Velez of the New Jersey Department of Human Services wrote the Burlington County Board of Social Services, and conveyed that she was aware of the issues and concerns expressed by County Welfare Directors, and anticipated submitting recommended changes to the D-SNAP program.

We appreciate the Commissioner's acknowledgement and concern, but believe that the magnitude of the problems – and the level of taxpayer dollars involved – give rise to greater scrutiny at the federal level. (In Burlington County alone, an estimated \$1.3 million was dispensed, most without any validation.)

Accordingly, we are respectfully requesting that you consider initiating formal inquiries at the Congressional level, in an effort to remedy a problem that clearly needs to be addressed.

I thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce D. Garganio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

BRUCE D. GARGANIO
Freeholder Director

Cc: All Freeholders
Paul Drayton, County Administrator
Daniel Boas, Director, Burlington County Board of Social Services