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**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4329**

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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- DEMOCRATIC SENIOR DEPUTY WHIP
- DEMOCRATIC REGIONAL WHIP

September 6, 2005

Mr. William Ludwig
Region Administrator, USDA
1100 Commerce
Dallas, Texas 75242

Dear Mr. Ludwig:

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed changes to consolidate and outsource crucial services provided by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). The Texas HHSC claims this new system will successfully interview over 140,000 Food Stamp applicants per month using 1742 employees qualified to do so. The interview used to determine food stamp eligibility can be complicated and people conducting these interviews must be well trained to accurately determine eligibility.

I do not believe that it will be possible for this number of eligibility workers to conduct interviews in a manner that complies with federal regulations. Compliance with these regulations is critical to ensure the continued integrity of the Food Stamp program.

The elderly, those with limited English or reading proficiency or those who simply find the complex system of applying for government assistance frustrating, will likely fall through the cracks if this number of employees are used.

This proposal should be examined closely to determine the impact it would have on the Food Stamp program in Texas. Also, I ask that you require the State of Texas to demonstrate how this proposed system will comply with federal requirements and assure that Texans have access to Food Stamps and other critical services. I urge the Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services division to take the following actions immediately:

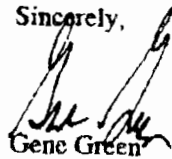
1. Withhold approval of the Accenture contract and require that Texas delay implementation of its program pending approval by the USDA.

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2. Find that the proposed Texas system will not meet the federal requirements for an interview by a state employee and therefore, Texas must seek a waiver of federal regulations.

Thank you for consideration and I look forward to receiving your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Gene Green

Member of Congress

*Note: Same letter
also sent to Eric Bost*