

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 17, 2024

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretaries Becerra and Vilsack:

In light of a major cyberattack, we write to urge your Departments to grant the State of Rhode Island flexibility and time to comply with administrative requirements related to its public benefits programs and to provide any additional support to ensure that eligible individuals do not lose access to needed benefits.

On December 5, 2024, RI Bridges, the State of Rhode Island's integrated online platform for social services, was hacked and the personal data (including names, addresses, Social Security numbers, and bank information) of approximately 500,000 people was stolen and has been held for ransom. The State directed the vendor responsible for administering the platform to shut down RI Bridges in order to remove all malicious code and remediate the threat. Individuals now must submit paper applications to secure their benefits. The impact could be large since RI Bridges manages enrollment and eligibility verifications for programs, including Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and more. HealthSource RI, the state's Affordable Care Act marketplace was also affected by this hack, which comes during the annual open-enrollment period for health insurance, when people apply for or renew coverage.

We appreciate everything your Departments have done already to assist Rhode Island with this situation, but given the scope of this hack and that it has targeted our most vulnerable constituents, we ask that you grant the State of Rhode Island any assistance and flexibility it requires within all application rules and regulations. Thank you for your attention to this request, and we look forward to your prompt reply.

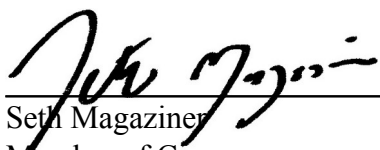
Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress