

United States Senate

May 18, 2022

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
JUDICIARY
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

President Biden,

I write with grave concern regarding the ongoing infant formula shortage facing this nation and your administration's lack of action to prevent such a shortage. Parents have been forced to drive long distances after finding empty shelves at the grocery store. Tennesseans have felt the worst of this nationwide shortage. Nationally, 43% of infant formula is out of stock, but in Tennessee, 54% of top-selling infant formula is unavailable.¹

In September 2021, your administration first received a report of an illness suspected to be linked to a formula manufactured at an Abbott plant in Sturgis, Michigan. Yet, your administration did not conduct an inspection of the facility until January 31, 2022.² On February 17, 2022, Abbott initiated a voluntary recall of certain powder formulas manufactured at their plant in Michigan.³ At the time of the recall, the nationwide infant formula shortage was over 25% due to supply-chain issues.⁴ The combination of recall and supply-chain issues exacerbated the shortages. This begs the question, why did your administration not act sooner to avoid the crisis we are in today?

Sadly, Tennesseans are not alone in feeling the effects of this administration's dysfunction.

I request responses to the following questions by March 27, 2022:

- 1) Why did the Food and Drug Administration wait until January 31, 2022, to inspect the Sturgis facility?
- 2) When did the FDA notify the White House of the possibility of an infant formula shortage?
- 3) When did the administration start to develop a plan to mitigate an infant formula shortage?

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn

United States Senator

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/baby-formula-shortage-2022-states/>

² <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/02/18/fda-infant-formula-illness-four-months-before-recall-00010226>

³ <https://abbott.mediaroom.com/2022-02-17-Abbott-Voluntarily-Recalls-Powder-Formulas-Manufactured-at-One-Plant>

⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/05/11/baby-formula-shortage-similac-alimentum-elecare-fda/>;
<https://datasembly.com/>