

August 24, 2020

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the 126 undersigned organizations, we urge you to support H.R. 7887, the Pandemic Child Hunger Prevention Act. Providing free school meals for all children during the 2020-2021 school year as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic will ensure that all students get two healthy meals every school day regardless of family income and what the new school day structure looks like.

Food insecurity, particularly in children, has only increased during this crisis. The pandemic has shined a bright light on all the fissures in our food and nutrition security systems, particularly for low-income and historically marginalized communities. With growing unemployment, increasing uncertainty surrounding the school year, and rising food insecurity – one in four children are expected to be food insecure due to the pandemic and Black and Hispanic households are twice as likely to be food insecure compared to white families – free school meals for all children gives us a powerful tool to keep kids from going hungry during these unprecedented times. Before the pandemic, school meals were often the only guaranteed meal for millions of children, and free school meals for all children helps keep these services going so a child's access to food isn't dependent on income during a public health and economic crisis.

Given the economic volatility and the massive influx of children who will be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, free school meals to all children reduces the burden on families and ensures that children who are newly eligible or on the edge of eligibility do not otherwise fall through the cracks. Free school meals for all children also removes the stigma of children participating in the program, provides equitable access to healthy meals, and provides school food service programs the administrative flexibility and a steady budget so they can shoulder through economic downturn and focus on their primary function: feeding children healthy meals.

Under the Pandemic Child Hunger Prevention Act, free meals would be temporarily provided to all students for the 2020-2021 school year through the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program. Since participation in the free and reduced lunch program is often used to identify the number of students from low-income families for Title I funding, schools will still be able to collect the necessary data from direct certification of students. Schools will also be able to use data from either school year 2020-2021 or school year 2021-2022, acknowledging that eligibility rates for additional government assistance programs could fluctuate in the upcoming school year. Finally, the bill addresses other child nutrition programs, such as the Summer Food Service Program, the Summer Seamless Option, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the National School Lunch Program Afterschool Snack Program, to ensure maximum flexibility for school food service programs to continue to feed children.

We know that families are struggling during this public health emergency. Supporting free school meals to all children and the Pandemic Child Hunger Prevention Act ensures that no child will go hungry, and would bring stability and consistency for the children, parents, and school food service professionals as they transition into uncertain school year. We urge you to support H.R. 7887, the Pandemic Child Hunger Prevention Act.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK)  
Agri-Cultura Network  
Alliance for Local Economic Prosperity  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Georgia Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Illinois Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Maryland Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Nevada Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, New York State Chapter 3  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Tennessee Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Washington Chapter  
American Commodity Distribution Association  
American Heart Association  
American Public Health Association  
Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)  
Association of SNAP Nutrition Education Administrators  
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists  
Balanced  
Black Farmers & Ranchers New Mexico  
Borrego Springs Unified School District  
Cajon Valley USD  
Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood  
Center for American Progress (CAP)  
Center for Ecoliteracy  
Center for Health Innovation  
Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Center for Wellness and Nutrition a program of the Public Health Institute  
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (WA State)  
Children's Council of San Francisco  
Children's Defense Fund  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York  
City Harvest  
Coalition for Healthy School Food  
Colorado Children's Campaign  
Community Food Advocates  
Community Health Council of Wyandotte County  
Counter Tools

CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute  
Dine' Food Sovereignty Alliance  
Ehrens Consulting  
Escondido Union High School District  
Fallbrook Union Elementary School District  
Farm to Table - New Mexico  
Feeding Kentucky  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Florida Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.  
Florida Impact to End Hunger  
Food and Nutrition Services San Diego Unified  
Food Research & Action Center  
FoodCorps  
Foodicine Health, Inc.  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
Grossmont Union High School District  
Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities  
Groundwork NRG  
Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic  
Healthy Active Oregon Coalition  
Healthy Food America  
Heaven's Windows  
Holmen School District  
Kansas Action for Children  
KC Healthy Kids  
Kitchen Angels  
La Mesa-Spring Valley School District  
La Semilla Food Center  
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University  
LiveWell Colorado  
Local 372/ NYC Board of Education Employees  
Lunch 4 Learning Parent Caucus NYC  
LunchAssist  
Lyon County Food and Farm Council  
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger  
McCune Foundation  
MomsRising  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Education Association  
National Education Association, New Mexico  
National Farm to School Network  
National League for Nursing  
National PTA  
National WIC Association

NC Pediatric Society  
New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council  
New Mexico Voices for Children  
North Carolina Alliance for Health  
North County Food Apology Council  
NorthWest Initiative  
Nutritional Director Mountain Empire Unified School District  
Oregon Pediatric Society  
Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine  
Ramona Unified School District  
Real Food for Kids  
Revolution Foods  
RI Healthy Schools Coalition  
San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative  
San Diego for Every Child  
San Diego Hunger Coalition  
San Marcos Unified School District  
Santee School District  
School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin  
Sebastopol Farmers Market  
SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators  
Social Security Works  
Socially Responsible Investment Coalition  
Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education  
South Bay Union School District  
Southwest Organizing Project  
The Praxis Project  
Trust for America's Health  
UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity  
UnidosUS  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
United Fresh Produce Association  
University of Rhode Island  
Upstream Public Health  
Urban School Food Alliance  
Vista Unified