

UPDATE ON CHILD NUTRITION REAUTHORIZATION

The House and Senate Agriculture committees still negotiating funding levels and contentious details of the **Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act**. However, Child Nutrition Reauthorization has been broken out into three bills listed below.

On November 3rd, Representatives Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY) introduced **The Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act** (H.R. 3886). The bill would strengthen the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) by allowing an additional healthy meal or snack for children in care for a full day, maximizing technology and innovation to reduce parent, provider and sponsor paperwork, streamlining program operations by reducing for-profit child care center eligibility determinations from monthly to biannually, and authorizing a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) review and new guidelines to assure a fair and reasonable compliance and appeals process.

The Summer Meals Act (S. 613/H.R. 1728), which is sponsored by Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Representatives Don Young (R-AK) and Rick Larsen (D-WA)

The Act accomplishes four main goals:

1. Better integrating summer education and summer meals programs. Currently, 50 percent of children in communities must be eligible for free or reduced lunch for organizations in the area to part of the federal Summer Meals Program. The Act changes that threshold to 40 percent, allowing more communities with a substantial population of low-income children to serve kids meals during the summertime.

2. Reducing red tape for public-private partnerships. The Act allows private organizations that already provide school meals to offer summer meal programs without having to submit more paperwork. Schools can provide meals during the summer through the National School Lunch Program. This bill will allow private organizations to submit one application for meal programs offered during and outside of school hours. And it covers additional meals and snacks during after school hours, weekends and holidays.

3. Improving nutrition in underserved, hard-to-reach areas. In the summertime, getting to educational programs that serve food can be challenging for children and families in rural areas. The Act provides support for organizations to offer transportation to children, as well as encouraging innovative ways to reach kids, such as mobile meal trucks.

4. Recognizing nutritional needs do not end with the school bell rings. Some kids spend their whole day at school while their parents are working. The Act allows schools and other organizations serving children to offer three meals per day, or two meals and a snack.

The Stop Child Summer Hunger Act (S. 1539; H.R. 2715), which is sponsored by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Representative Susan Davis (D-CA), **The Access to Healthy Food for Young Children Act** (S. 1833), which is sponsored by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA).

This legislation would accomplish the following:

1. Provides a Summer EBT Card to families with children. Families with one or more children who qualify for free and reduced price school meals would receive an EBT card with funds for purchasing food at retail stores.

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2. Targets low-income children. Children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals during the school year would receive a Summer EBT card.
3. Offers benefits of \$150 per summer to each eligible child. The amount will be adjusted annually based on inflation.
4. Requires sharing of information on making healthy food choices. Local Education Agencies must provide information on cards in making healthy food choices and maximizing resources to families receiving the Summer EBT card.

While not quite the same, these bills are similar to SOME of the about-to-be-released recommendations of the National Hunger Commission relative to improvements in the child nutrition programs, and are an improvement over current regulations, providing access for more children throughout the nation.

The roll back of the whole grains, fresh fruit, and sodium requirements are being done as part of the 2016 FY appropriations for the United States Department of Agriculture. It is possible the three bills outlined above could be rolled into one package for final passage, and it is also possible last minute action could save the nutrition requirements, which are being met by many school districts throughout the nation.

The plan to create block grants for the SNAP program is still part of the 2016 FY appropriations process and remains a very real threat. You may recall from a previous presentation that block- granting SNAP will remove the flexibility of this crucial program to respond to fluctuations in employment. The number of people experiencing food insecurity during the recession doubled, and our SNAP participation increased commensurately along with use of food pantries which tripled, settling back as individuals returned to employment, which generally makes people no longer eligible for participation in SNAP. Under a block grant, we would have been unable to respond beyond a formula related to the number of people participating in the previous year, and far more people would have suffered from hunger, not just food insecurity.

The Food Security Task Force may wish to send a letter to the Governor recommending a message to Nevada's federal delegation requesting their support of these child nutrition bills on behalf of the almost half million children in Nevada who live in food insecure homes...one in four children in our state, as outlined in the attached document.

In addition, we would suggest recommending against block granting the SNAP appropriations process, due to the potential for severe impact on Nevada and the nation during times of economic and employment fluctuations.