



HR0615

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1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Regular access to healthy and affordable meals
3 has been proven to be one of the strongest means of improved
4 school performance, improved health, and sound childhood
5 development; and

6 WHEREAS, According to 2020 census data, Black households
7 reported food insecurity rates that were more than twice as
8 high as white households; and

9 WHEREAS, Research shows that childhood hunger and food
10 insecurity have a range of negative impacts on the health,
11 academic performance, and overall well-being of children; and

12 WHEREAS, Research suggests that older Black students may
13 be more likely to skip meals during the week than white
14 students; and

15 WHEREAS, School nutrition programs offer the opportunity
16 to provide healthy food and improve dietary quality for
17 students who may otherwise not eat; and

18 WHEREAS, School meals can also have a positive impact on
19 grades, absences, and tardiness among students; and

1 WHEREAS, Students from Black families are more likely to
2 receive free or reduced-price lunches during the school year,
3 and research shows students who receive these meals during the
4 school year are more likely to face food insufficiency in the
5 summer; and

6 WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic led to a dramatic spike in
7 the rate of children experiencing hunger and food insecurity,
8 peaking at 18% of families with children reporting their
9 household did not have enough to eat in December 2020
10 according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and
11 also created challenges to safely accessing child nutrition
12 programs; and

13 WHEREAS, Substantial racial and ethnic disparities in food
14 insecurity exist among parents of school-age children, and
15 Black families experienced significant hardship as a result of
16 the pandemic; and

17 WHEREAS, Approximately four in 10 families with parents
18 who are Black (40.8%) reported food insecurity in the prior 30
19 days, almost triple the rate of families with white parents
20 (15.1%); and

21 WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an ongoing
22 increase in the scope and scale of children experiencing

1 hunger and food insecurity, with the most recent estimates
2 from Feeding America showing that 13 million may face hunger
3 in 2021 compared with the all-time low of 11 million in 2019,
4 according to USDA; and

5 WHEREAS, Non-congregate meal delivery options were
6 especially critical in distributing meals to children in rural
7 and hard to reach communities or where transportation
8 challenges make it difficult for programs to distribute meals
9 at a localized site; and

10 WHEREAS, Child nutrition programs are the front line of
11 defense against childhood hunger and food insecurity,
12 promoting healthy eating and providing healthy, nutritious
13 food for the nation's children through the National School
14 Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer
15 EBT for Children (SEBTC), Pandemic-EBT, the Community
16 Eligibility Provision (CEP), and Special Supplemental
17 Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and

18 WHEREAS, The SEBTC Program reaches children who most need
19 additional food support over summer and school breaks and is
20 proven to reduce food insecurity among children; and

21 WHEREAS, P-EBT, a temporary program providing a grocery
22 benefit to children who have lost access to free and reduced

1 priced meals at school due to COVID-19, has been highly
2 effective at reducing food insecurity; and

3 WHEREAS, The CEP program promotes equity and reduces
4 stigma for families and has been proven to reduce hunger and
5 improve student outcomes; and

6 WHEREAS, A proven barrier to continued participation in
7 the WIC Program is unavailability of remote appointments,
8 short certification periods, and lack of flexibility in food
9 purchasing, ordering, and delivery; and

10 WHEREAS, Millions of children benefit from these programs,
11 including the 21.5 million low-income children who
12 participated in the school lunch program and the 12.4 million
13 who participated in the school breakfast program in the
14 2018-2019 school year, as well as the 6.3 million mothers and
15 children who received food and nutrition education through WIC
16 and 2.8 million children who ate summer meals in 2019; and

17 WHEREAS, The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 has
18 improved the nutritional standards for school nutrition
19 programs, and as a result, kids have access to increased
20 fruits, vegetables, and whole grains but less sugars, fats,
21 and sodium; Congress has the opportunity to ensure that
22 children continue to have access to nutritious and quality

1 meals to help prevent childhood hunger and obesity; and

2 WHEREAS, Congress has an opportunity to improve and
3 strengthen access to nutrition through the 2021 Child
4 Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) bill by making permanent the
5 COVID-19 waiver flexibilities that help to better reach
6 children and by including provisions that would increase
7 access and reach more kids through streamlining, reducing
8 administrative burdens, and providing program flexibility,
9 giving them the access to quality meals that they have during
10 the school year; and

11 WHEREAS, An adequately funded and evidence-based
12 reauthorization bill can reduce childhood hunger and food
13 insecurity in America, help reduce childhood obesity, improve
14 child nutrition and health, and enhance healthy child
15 development and school readiness, allowing children to reach
16 their full potential; and

17 WHEREAS, Congress has a unique opportunity in the upcoming
18 reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act to improve and
19 promote equitable access and nutrition for millions of
20 children, particularly low-income children; therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
22 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that

1 we urge Congress to protect, strengthen, and improve the child
2 nutrition programs through a Child Nutrition and WIC
3 Reauthorization Act that builds on the Healthy, Hunger Free
4 Kids Act of 2010 to ensure that low-income children continue
5 to have access to nutritious meals throughout the year; and be
6 it further

7 RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to streamline and simplify
8 provisions governing the summer meals program in order to
9 reduce administrative burdens, bureaucracies, and duplications
10 in program administration and operation during the
11 reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to allow for more
13 flexibility around where children are able to access and eat
14 summer meals, by allowing for non-congregate models in
15 communities where summer meals sites are not available and by
16 lowering the threshold required to operate sites open to all
17 children; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to permanently authorize
19 the operation of the SEBTC program, make program funding
20 mandatory, and expand the reach of the program to kids
21 eligible for free or reduced-price school meals in all states,
22 tribal nations, and localities in order to close the summer
23 meals gap; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to permanently authorize
2 the PEBT system beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing
3 authorities to quickly deliver increased nutritional aid
4 during times of crisis; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to expand the
6 well-documented benefits of CEP, which allows schools to serve
7 meals at no charge to all students if enough are identified as
8 qualifying for other assistance programs, by lowering the
9 minimum identified student percentage (ISP), by increasing the
10 ISP multiplier, by expanding direct certification with
11 Medicaid data nationwide, and by supporting the improvement of
12 direct certification systems; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to increase the
14 flexibility of WIC appointments through increased access to
15 remote appointments and extended certification periods as well
16 as to support equitable access to the WIC food package through
17 modernization efforts that increase access to online ordering,
18 online purchasing, and delivery; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That we support the enactment of a Child
20 Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act that ensures low-income
21 children's improved and equitable access to and participation
22 in the child nutrition programs and includes the policy goals

1 stated above; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
3 delivered to the President of the United States, the Vice
4 President of the United States, and other federal and state
5 government officials and agencies as appropriate.