

January 22, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Blanche Lincoln
Chairman, Senate Agriculture
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman, House Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kline
Ranking Member, House Education and
Labor
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Child Nutrition Reauthorization Funding and Program Priorities

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Boehner, Chairman Lincoln, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Chambliss and Ranking Member Kline:

The child nutrition programs – school lunch and breakfast, child care and WIC, summer feeding and afterschool snacks and meals – are facing a two part challenge: rising rates of hunger and obesity. The programs are not reaching all those children who are eligible. In addition, while the nutritional quality of the programs has improved significantly since Congress required that they follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, it is increasingly difficult for providers to meet these guidelines without additional resources.

A well-conceived, robustly-funded reauthorization bill can reduce hunger and food insecurity in America, help reduce childhood overweight and obesity, improve child nutrition and health, and enhance child development and school readiness. To that end we urge Congress and the Administration to enact a reauthorization bill that:

-assures and strengthens program access and supports participation by underserved children and communities;

-enhances nutrition quality and provides adequate meal reimbursements; and

-modernizes technology and simplifies program administration and operation.

The President, as you know, has proposed an additional \$1 billion per year for child nutrition reauthorization to start down the path of eliminating childhood hunger by the year 2015. Given the recent USDA report showing that one in every four children live in

households struggling against hunger, the child nutrition programs will need at least that amount of funding, if not a significantly higher investment, to respond to the current crisis. The recent Institute of Medicine recommendations for school meals also demonstrate the need for additional resources for improving the nutritional quality of school meals.

The successful, cost-effective child nutrition programs play a critical role in helping children--especially those in low-income families--achieve access to quality nutrition, child care, and educational enrichment activities while improving their overall health, development, and school achievement.

Despite the extraordinary challenges facing our nation, investing in our children must remain a top priority. The child nutrition programs must receive the critical funding needed to support and improve the nutritional health and well-being of our children.

We appreciate your leadership and support on behalf of our nation's children.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women
Action for Healthy Kids
Afterschool Alliance
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Health Education
American Association of School Administrators
American Frozen Food Institute
Apple Processors Association
Association of Nutrition Services Agencies
B. Sackin & Associates
Bread for the World
Coalition on Human Needs
Community Action Partnership
Community Food Security Coalition
Congressional Hunger Center
eGovernment Payments Council of the EFTA
End Hunger Network
Feed the Children
Feeding America
First Focus
Fitness Forward
Food Research and Action Center
Grocery Manufacturers Association
Healthy Schools Campaign
International Dairy Foods Association
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Migrant Legal Action Program
National Action Against Obesity

National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association for Health Education
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Chicken Council
National Consumers League
National Council of Jewish Women
National CSFP Association
National Education Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Turkey Federation
National WIC Association
National Women's Law Center
Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine
RESULTS
School Nutrition Association
Service Employees International Union
Share Our Strength
Snack Food Association
United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association
United Way Worldwide
World Hunger Year