



October 14, 2022

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman U.S. Senate Committee on
Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member U.S. Senate Committee on
Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
Washington, D.C. 20510

cc: Chairman Cory Booker, Senator Mike Braun

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

The Alliance to End Hunger* is deeply grateful for the bipartisanship and work of the committee that brought the Keep Kids Fed Act to fruition and has already effectively fed many low-income children since the start of the school year. In recognition that these enhancements and waivers are temporary, Alliance to End Hunger urges the Agriculture Committee to put forth long term solutions and move a child nutrition reauthorization bill forward by the end of this year.

The 11.1 million U.S. kids living in poverty are relying on Congress to act. The effects of the pandemic are still rippling through communities and child nutrition reauthorization is a critical opportunity to ensure low-income children and families have access to the nutrition they need to thrive. Historically, families of color have been disproportionately impacted by hunger and food insecurity and this inequality has only been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The Alliance applauds the House Education and Labor Committee for putting forth a strong child nutrition bill this year and we respectfully urge the Senate Agriculture Committee use the bill as a starting point for negotiations. The Alliance to End Hunger membership is confident that the committee can agree on bipartisan policy solutions that are proven to alleviate hunger as outlined below:

Summer Food Service Program & the Afterschool Meal Program

- Permanently authorize and expand Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) nationwide (it is a demonstration program available in a handful of states). The program should be made available to low-income families during school breaks and the summer to supplement household food budgets when free and reduced-price school meals are unavailable.
- Lower the area eligibility threshold for summer and afterschool meals from 50% to 40% free and reduced-price students and streamline the two programs so sponsors can feed children year-round.
- Allow summer sites operating all day to serve a third meal to children.
- Authorize a “non-congregate” service option that builds on successful models used during the COVID-19 response, allowing the distribution of multiple meals at one time in rural and hard-to-reach communities, as well as in cases of extreme weather or emergencies.



National School Lunch & Breakfast Programs

- Expand the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) to more low-income schools by lowering the eligibility threshold from 40% to 25% identified students and through increasing the federal reimbursement multiplier from 1.6 to 2.5. These improvements will increase the number of low-income children that have access to the well-documented benefits of free school meals and more schools will benefit from reduced administrative burdens and increased federal reimbursements for meals served at no cost.
- Expand Medicaid direct certification nationwide to improve access to school meals and eliminate unnecessary paperwork. To achieve this, states will need direct certification improvement grants.
- Eliminate the reduced-price category to simplify the school meals programs and support students from financially strapped low-income working families.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

- Expand eligibility to WIC to address coverage gaps by allowing two-year WIC certification periods, extending eligibility to all postpartum mothers to two years, and extending eligibility to children from five years to six years.
- Streamline certifications through lessons learned during the pandemic to permit telehealth options and onboard new families via video or telephone options, enhance adjunctive eligibility to include Head Start, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and Food Distribution on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and enhance coordination with healthcare providers to facilitate greater access to WIC services.
- Invest in WIC nutrition services and technologies to grow and diversify the WIC workforce, permit benefit redemption through online shopping, further integrate data with other healthcare services, and streamline transactions at farmers markets.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

- Allow CACFP providers to serve an additional meal or snack to reduce coverage gaps for children in full-day programs.
- Lower the area eligibility threshold for CACFP from 50 percent to 40 percent low-income children to ensure better access to the program.
- Increase reimbursements for meals and snacks served to make the program more financially viable for providers.
- Streamline certification paperwork requirements and extend certification periods to reduce administrative burdens and duplicative paperwork for providers and participants.

Farm to School Program

- Expand and strengthen the USDA farm to school grant program through advancing equity by including requirements to reach underserved communities, as well as engage beginning, veteran, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.



Access to Nutrition during Disasters and Public Emergencies

- Allow the USDA secretary authority to issue waiver flexibilities during disasters and public emergencies. To quickly respond to nutrition gaps for low-income families caused by closure of typical school and out-of-school-time meal programs due to disasters and public emergencies, allow the secretary to issue waivers to provide flexibilities to program operators to ensure meals can reach children in need.

With renewed attention and energy on ending hunger in the United States following the historic White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health and the release of the [Biden-Harris National Strategy](#) that outlines a whole-of-government approach to addressing the root causes of poverty-related hunger and improving nutrition, the committee's expertise on child nutrition challenges and policy solutions are needed more than ever to make this strategy become a reality.

Now is the time to build on the momentum of the commitments made by the White House. Feeding low-income children should remain a top priority for Congress and the Senate Agriculture Committee is best positioned to achieve this through passing meaningful child nutrition legislation, moving our nation one step closer to ending hunger for all Americans.

Respectfully,

**Eric Mitchell, Executive Director
Alliance to End Hunger**

The Alliance to End Hunger is a coalition of corporations, non-profits, faith-based organizations, universities, foundations, international organizations, and individuals. While driving factors may vary among membership, there is a shared conviction that addressing hunger is essential.



The Alliance to End Hunger engages diverse institutions to build the public and political will to end hunger at home and abroad.

Alliance to End Hunger Organizational Members

Corporate

Amazon
American Peanut Council
Bank of America
Cantera Partners
Cargill, Inc.
Corteva Agriscience
DoorDash
GrainPro
Instacart
Nuro
United Health Care

Non-Profit

1,000 Days
A Place at the Table
AARP
Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development (AIARD)
Black Women's Health Imperative
Congressional Hunger Center
Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA)
Edesia
The Farmlink Project
Feeding America
Food Enterprise Solutions
Food Rescue Hero
FoodFinder
Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF)
The Global FoodBanking Network
Global Volunteers
Growing Hope Globally
Healthy Living Coalition
Helping Hands Community
Helping the Hungry Virtually
The Hunger Project
Hungry Harvest
InterAction
Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA)
March of Dimes
Meals on Wheels America
MEANS Database
Meds & Food for Kids

Mercy Without Limits
Move For Hunger
National Farmers Union
National FFA Organization
National WIC Association
One Acre Fund
Opportunity International
The Outreach Program
Penny Appeal USA
Poetry X Hunger
ProMedica
RESULTS
Rise Against Hunger
The Root Cause Coalition
Save the Children
Seed Programs International
Share Our Strength - No Kid Hungry
Souper Bowl of Caring
World Food Program USA

Faith-Based

Bread for the World
Christian Connections for International Health
Church World Service (CWS)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
ICNA Relief
Islamic Relief USA
Lutheran World Relief
MAZON - A Jewish Response to Hunger
Partners Worldwide
Society of St. Andrew
World Renew

University

Auburn University
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Foundation

AARP Foundation
Eleanor Crook Foundation
Farm Journal Foundation
SODEXO Stop Hunger Foundation

**Alliance to End Hunger policy priorities are developed through consultation with the Alliance's Advocacy Committee. This letter is signed by the Alliance to End Hunger as an organization and does not necessarily reflect official views of the Alliance's individual members.*