



The McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program: A Bipartisan Initiative with Proven Results that are Worth Protecting

For the past 25 years, the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program has assisted millions of families with meeting their dreams of sending their children to school, and has helped feed and educate millions of children – especially girls – who may not have realized a childhood education otherwise. However, this valuable and crucial program is now under attack.

The McGovern-Dole program began as a pilot project in 2000 and was made permanent by the 2002 farm bill. It has traditionally enjoyed bipartisan support due to the tremendous benefits to the children receiving the food, and also its benefits to U.S. farmers, shippers, and Non-Governmental Organizations, as well as American strategic interests. Unfortunately, the Administration has misguidedly cancelled 17 projects implemented under the program, which utilizes U.S.-produced agricultural commodities to establish school feeding programs in low-income countries. Without these meal programs in place, it is possible that many children will either learn on empty stomachs or simply not go to school at all.



Evidence has shown that school feeding programs increase literacy, improve learning outcomes, reduce school absences, build local economies, and reduce migration levels. McGovern-Dole can use commodities grown in any state, including corn, rice, beans, soy, to source school meals. In

2023, the program fed 2.5 million food-insecure children using over 37,000 metric tons of U.S.-produced commodities.



The Administration's approach to McGovern-Dole has been inconsistent. Despite the cancellations, 30 McGovern-Dole projects are still being operated in 22 countries. The future of the program remains uncertain, with the President's budget request for FY26 zeroing out the program and the House calling

for a \$20 million cut.

The McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program is exceedingly valuable to millions of children and communities around the world, demonstrates our nation's commitment and leadership in global food security and education, and strengthens the U.S. economically and strategically. It is essential that this program remains intact and is strengthened to build upon its historic success.