

Senator Stabenow
Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Scott
House Education & Labor Committee Chair
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Boozman
Senate Agriculture Committee Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Foxx
House Education & Labor Committee Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 23, 2022

Dear Senators and Representatives,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing public school superintendents, educational service agency administrators, school business officials, and rural educators, we write to express our strong support for the Keep Kids Fed Act. We applaud you, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, House Education and Labor Chairman Scott, and Ranking Member Foxx for your bipartisan, bicameral leadership on this time-sensitive issue. This legislation provides critical support for school districts with the additional resources and flexibilities necessary to allow them to continue to serve meals this summer and next school year.

The child nutrition waivers have been essential in allowing schools to serve their students the meals that they need to learn and grow. Across the country, districts quickly adapted operations when schools closed by setting up grab-and-go models and delivering meals to students. Schools remain open due to the hard work and dedication of educators; at the same time, the waivers remain necessary as districts deal with new challenges outside of and in addition to COVID-related pressures, including staffing shortages, supply chain issues, and more.

Due to the nationwide supply chain disruption, school meal programs are dealing with unreliable food deliveries—receiving half-full orders or last-minute substitutes and cancellations. These pressures are exacerbated by record-high prices for food and supplies, leaving programs struggling to serve students and financially recover from the past three years. The increased reimbursements and flexibilities provided by the waivers were critical common-sense policies that were key to the success of the school nutrition programs. We are grateful to see them continued through this coming summer and School Year 2022-23 in the Keep Kids Fed Act.

We have been sounding the alarm on how detrimental the expiration of the child nutrition waivers would be for school districts and the students and families they serve for months, and we applaud you for listening when your constituents and educational experts weighed in. We commend you for acknowledging that schools cannot teach the student until they feed the child, and for ensuring that the important of work of keeping kids fed is a bipartisan, bicameral priority, not a political football. We strongly urge Congress to pass the Keep Kids Fed Act before the waivers expire on June 30.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of School Business Officials, International
National Rural Education Association
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium

CC: Senate Agriculture Committee
House Education and Labor Committee