

# News from Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

Representing New York's 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District • Brooklyn, Manhattan & Queens  
Chairwoman, House Small Business Committee



For Immediate Release  
July 29, 2020

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## **Velázquez Seeks Flexibility for School Nutrition Programs**

*As Schools Explore Reopening Options, Bill Would Ensure Student Meal Access*

Washington, DC – As schools contemplate how they will operate in the fall, Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY) is authoring legislation that will extend current COVID-19 waivers for school nutrition programs into the next school year. Legislation previously enacted by Congress, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), afforded schools greater flexibility in enacting emergency measures to provide students with nutritious food issued to states, and schools. Since enacted, these waivers have allowed meal delivery and transportation options for states to get food in the hands of students. However, many of these flexible standards expire at the end of September.

“Schools across the nation are contemplating a range of scenarios as they consider how the fall and the new academic year will look,” Velázquez noted. “We need schools to have maximum flexibility as they help children continue receiving nutritious meals.”

Velázquez’s bill would extend the previous school nutrition waivers and authorizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture to grant FFCRA school nutrition waivers beyond solely school closures to schools that are open and practicing social distancing. As schools consider reopening, they will need more flexibility due to social distancing requirements such as meals being served in the classroom, children coming through the cafeteria in smaller groups while retaining 6 feet of distance and other precautions.

“For so many working families, schools serve as a vital source of meals for children,” Velázquez noted. “No matter what the school year looks like in the fall – and it may vary by locality – it is critical that this source of nutrition be made available to our children, whether they are attending school on staggered schedules, learning remotely or some permutation in between.”

Extending these waivers to the end of the School Year 2020-2021 will allow schools to serve meals outside of the standard mealtimes and group settings, allow parent or guardians to continue picking up meals for their children and ensure appropriate safety measures are taken while still providing meals and meal supplements, so children remain fed.

“Schools are a nutritional lifeline for millions of families,” Velázquez added. “We need schools to continue accessing these options to supply food to children. I look forward to working with my colleagues to see this legislation enacted.”

The bill, H.R. 7764, has been referred to the House Education and Labor Committee.

Supporting organizations of this bill include the School Nutrition Association, National PTA, National Association of Elementary School Principals, Eat Right, New York City Harvest, Association of School Business Officials, Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE), and AASA - The School Superintendents Association.

This legislation is cosponsored by U.S. Reps: Gwen S. Moore (D-WI), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Adriano Espaillat (D-NY), Jim Cooper (D-TN), Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Adam Smith (D-WA), Suzan Delbene (D-WA), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Peter Welch (D-VT), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA), Ed Case (D-HI), Joseph D. Morelle (D-NY), Tim Ryan (D-OH), Frederica S. Wilson (D-FL), Linda T. Sánchez (D-CA), Kathy Castor (D-FL), John B. Larson (D-CT), Yvette Clarke (D-NY), and Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS).

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