



**Washington
Child Nutrition
Reauthorization
Coalition**

**Message to Congress:
Keep Child Nutrition Reauthorization Moving!**

Every day in the United States, some 17 million children are hungry because they don't have enough food at home. In Washington State, we have about 377,000 hungry kids. **We call on Congress to make it a top priority to feed our children where they live, learn and play by investing an additional \$10 billion over 10 years as a part of Child Nutrition Reauthorization.**

Senate and House bills have been introduced to continue and strengthen critical nutrition programs for our struggling young families, including the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program, national school lunch and breakfasts, afterschool snacks and summer lunches, and meal programs in child care and adult care settings.

With an increased investment of \$10 billion over 10 years, Congress can significantly improve each federal Child Nutrition program by following three guiding principles:

- **Improving access to the programs**
- **Modernizing enrollment and administration of the programs**
- **Improving nutritional quality of the food included in the programs**

Study after study shows that hungry kids simply cannot learn in the classroom. Chronic hunger profoundly hinders kids' ability to focus, retain information and thrive in our schools. Providing our children with proper nutrition for the school day is critical to the future success of our country.

The childhood obesity epidemic in the United States threatens the future health of our population, our economy and our national security. For many low-income kids, obesity and malnutrition are closely linked as families are forced to make short-term bargains with long-term health consequences—like buying fast food or other high-calorie, low-cost foods to feed the family. Obesity puts kids at risk of heart disease and diabetes later on in life and can shorten a person's lifespan up to a decade. Last year in the U.S., we spent \$150 billion on obesity-related medical costs.

The childhood obesity epidemic also threatens our national security; three out of four 18- to 24-year olds today are unfit for military service, in most cases due to the lack a high school diploma or obesity. Strengthening child nutrition programs to the level of \$10 billion over 10 years will complement other national efforts to tackle child obesity, such as First Lady Obama's recently announced *Let's Move* initiative.

Senate and House bills encompass the three guiding principles above that provide a strong foundation to end childhood hunger and obesity. The House bill adds significant improvements to summer and afterschool meals, and school breakfast not contained in the Senate bill. Neither bill incorporates the full increase of \$10 billion over 10 years that these programs need to fully tackle these national problems. We have a responsibility to ensure all our kids are getting the nutritious food they need to be healthy and reach their full potential in the classroom and beyond. **On behalf of Washington's children, we call on Congress to invest in our children, invest in our future, and strengthen our investment America's child nutrition programs.**

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