



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

This message is being sent to network public policy personnel.

NOVEMBER 2015

Hunger is a symptom of lack of resources. While the recession may be over, the number of Americans still struggling with this basic need remains unchanged. **Unemployment, low wages, and high housing costs have been identified as the major causes of hunger.** The problem of hunger here is compounded given New Jersey's high cost of living. In addition, cuts to the benefit level of those already receiving assistance further threaten New Jersey households. Continuing to strengthen and support federal nutrition programs is more important than ever. Summary of important legislation follows.

Improved Child Nutrition Programs

On September 30, the child nutrition bill will expire. This legislation helps feed millions of children by supporting school nutrition programs, summer food, child care programs and WIC. We need your help to convince Congress to get to work and make passing a strong child nutrition bill that invests in our nation's children a priority.

Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) Policy Recommendations

- Strengthen States' Ability to Reach Kids During the Summer and weekends
- Streamline Regulations for Community Based Providers
- Leverage Schools Beyond the School Day
- Strengthen Access and Quality in School Meal Programs and WIC

In anticipation of CNR, several marker bills have been introduced. These bills would allow more children to be fed especially during the summer months. Only 19% of New Jersey's eligible children access summer meals. The Community FoodBank of New Jersey joins Feeding America in urging Congress to help close the large summer meal gap. Senator Booker and Senator Menendez have taken a leadership role by co-sponsoring the Hunger Free Summer for Kids Act. There is still work to be done in the House of Representatives.

BACKGROUND:

The **Summer Meals Act of 2015** (House bill H.R.1728 / S613) introduced by Senators Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Representatives Don Young (R-AK) and Rick Larsen (D-WA) would strengthen, protect, and expand access to the Summer Nutrition Programs. This Act would lower the area eligibility test to 40% (from 50%) allowing community-based organizations to increase participation when children in the area are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, allow local government agencies and private nonprofit organizations to feed children year-round through the Summer Food Service Program, provide funding for transportation grants to fund innovative approaches and mobile meal trucks and allow all sites to add a third meal strengthening programs serving working families. **Senator Booker, Congressman Pallone, Congressman Payne, Congressman Norcross and Congresswoman Watson-Coleman have signed on as a co-sponsor of this legislation!**

The **Hunger Free Summer for Kids Act of 2015** (S1966) introduced by Senators John Boozman (R-AR), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Mark Kirk (R-IL), and Joe Donnelly (D-IN) would enable a comprehensive solution to summer

child hunger for children in communities most underserved by the program. This includes the option to implement summer electronic benefit transfer (EBT) or non-congregate feeding programs. With these improvements, as many as 6.5 million children who are underserved by the program currently could get the food they need during the summer months. These policies complement the site-based model and strengthen the overall program thereby improving summer nutrition for low-income children no matter where they live. This legislation modeled on the successful demonstration projects USDA administered to test both program options gives communities additional proven methods to better reach eligible children. **Senator Menendez and Senator Booker have signed on as a co-sponsor of this legislation!**

The Access to Healthy Food for Young Children Act of 2015 (S. 1833) introduced by Senator Casey (D-PA), would enable more children in child care and afterschool programs to have access to healthy meals and snacks through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) by improving the area eligibility test, allowing the option of a third meal service (typically a snack or supper), increasing CACFP reimbursements, enhancing administrative reimbursements for CACFP sponsors, providing two year implementation, nutrition, and wellness funds for state CACFP agencies and sponsors, continuing funding for USDA's CACFP nutrition and wellness education study, creating a "Provision 2" option for child care centers, providing a carry-over option for sponsors of centers and afterschool programs, streamlining program requirements, reducing paperwork, and maximizing technology to improve program access. **Senator Menendez has signed on as a co-sponsor of this legislation!**

The Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act (HR 3886) introduced November 3rd by Representatives Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY) expands and strengthens the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) so more children have access to nutritious meals and snacks in child care centers, family day care homes, and afterschool programs.

To learn more about Child Nutrition Reauthorization visit <http://community.cfbnj.org/advocacy-legislation-priorities>

Sign Up for CFBNJ Advocacy Alerts: <https://community.cfbnj.org/advocate>

Diane Riley, Director of Advocacy driley@cfbnj.org

908-242-3959