



October 26, 2015

Hon. Pat Roberts, Chair
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
U.S. Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
U.S. Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. John Kline, Chair
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Bobby Scott, Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Roberts, Ranking Member Stabenow, Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of school superintendents serving nearly 10,000 local school systems and 55,000 school nutrition professionals nationwide, we urge you to advance Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation that provides local school districts sufficient resources and flexibility to prepare healthy, delicious school meals.

School districts are dedicated to providing nutritious meals and snacks that help students achieve their full potential. However, Congress cannot ignore the higher costs and operational challenges resulting from under-funded and overly prescriptive regulatory requirements stemming from the 2010 reauthorization. School districts are being forced to financially subsidize meals at the expense of educational programs.

[According to USDA](#), the school meal regulations added 10 cents to the cost of preparing every lunch and 27 cents for every breakfast, forcing local school districts to absorb \$1.2 billion in additional food and labor costs in FY 2015 alone. To meet the rules, schools were provided only 6 additional cents for lunch, and while every breakfast must include an extra serving of fruit, schools were given no additional funds.

Meanwhile, the [US Government Accountability Office](#) finds that “challenges with student acceptance” of the changes have contributed to 1.4 million fewer children choosing school lunch each day. Declining paid meal participation increases the stigma for students who depend on free or reduced priced meals while reducing revenue for meal programs struggling to cover costs and improve menus.

No one in the debate over Child Nutrition Reauthorization is interested in reversing progress. To sustain the progress local schools have already achieved, Congress must provide adequate funding and flexibility so that school districts can successfully educate healthy, successful citizens.

Sincerely,

The School Nutrition Association
The School Superintendents Association