

April 8, 2010

Dear Colleague,

We invite you to sign the following letter in support of proper funding for the Child Nutrition Act Reauthorization. As you may know, these programs are currently operating under an extension and must be reauthorized this year. We support President Obama's request for a \$1 billion increase in the Child Nutrition Programs and we are asking Speaker Pelosi to help identify potential funding should the Education and Labor Committee not be able to find the proper funding within the Committee's jurisdiction. Please contact us or our staff – Keith Stern with Rep. McGovern (5-6101) and Justin Rone with Rep. Emerson (5-4404) – if you have any questions or want to add your name to this letter.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Jo Ann Emerson
Member of Congress

April __, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

We are writing in strong support of reauthorizing Child Nutrition Programs this year. Under your leadership, this Congress has committed to addressing critical economic and health challenges of a generation. The reauthorization of the child nutrition programs is a crucial legislative component to this effort. President Obama has called for a historic investment in these programs in order to respond to two of the greatest child health challenges of our time, hunger and poor nutrition. Respectfully, we request your leadership in assisting in the identification of possible offsets to support President Obama's call for new investments to properly fund these important anti-hunger and nutrition programs.

President Obama included a \$1 billion increase in funding for the Child Nutrition Programs in both his FY 2010 and FY 2011 budgets. This request clearly highlights the importance of and the need to invest in these programs. Nearly one-quarter of children today live in households that don't always have enough food to feed the family. Furthermore, families that struggle to have enough food often also struggle to access healthful food. Poverty exacerbates children's risk of unhealthy weight gain, but poor nutrition affects children's health and well-being across all income levels. Today, nearly one-third of all children are overweight or obese. These challenges to children's health are present in every district across the country and are recognized as critical public health concerns.

No child should have to go hungry and all children should have access to enough food, and the right food, to help them to achieve their potential. The federal child nutrition programs are a critical tool for addressing these challenges. These programs provide children access to nutritious food and meals throughout the year through the National School Lunch program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Food Service Program. These programs fill in critical gaps for families in poverty as well as those who are struggling in this economy. For some children, the meals provided through the child nutrition programs are the only healthy and nutritious meals they will eat each day.

Similarly, the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children serves a unique role for low-income women and their children by providing nutrition education, supplemental foods and services to address nutritional risk. The evidence demonstrates that this program provides for a healthier start in life for children.

Today nearly 45 million individuals are served by these programs. While these programs work, there are millions of low-income children who don't have access to these benefits, and more can be done to ensure that these benefits are of high quality, based on current nutrition science. This Congress can continue to improve on their success; however, improving these programs will require a significant investment.

While we recognize the size of the federal deficit and the need to reduce this deficit, we support proper funding – offset and paid for – that allows for critical improvements in access to and the quality of the Child Nutrition Programs. Chairman Miller is working on a reauthorization that will properly marry improved access and nutrition quality to address the priorities outlined in the President's budget. We are committed to working with him on this effort. To support this effort, we are seeking your assistance in identifying offsets to properly fund these improvements.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to working with you further on this important reauthorization.

Sincerely,