



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

September 24, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
235 Cannon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
House Minority Leader
1011 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Richard Moore
*Senator
Massachusetts Senate
President, NCSL*

Tim Rice
*Executive Director
Illinois Legislative Information System
Staff Chair, NCSL*

William Pound
Executive Director

RE: H.R. 5504

Dear Representative:

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) urges the House to pass the Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act (H.R. 5504), legislation that reauthorizes federal child nutrition programs. This bill, which passed out of House Education and Labor Committee on a bipartisan vote, helps children who are in school, in out-of-school time programs, or in child care by improving their access to food and the quality of the food available. It is a critical reauthorization at a time when food insecurity is rising. In 2008, 14.6% of households were food insecure.

The Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act contains key improvements to the USDA child nutrition programs, including:

- Adding a performance-based increase to the federal reimbursement rate of six cents per meal for schools that meet new nutrition standards;
- Expanding the Afterschool Meal Program to all 50 states (right now, only 13 states and the District of Columbia can operate this program);
- Improving direct certification for school meals;
- Providing competitive grant funds to promote the expansion of the School Breakfast Program; and
- Changing area eligibility standards for the Summer Food Service Program to assist rural areas in qualifying.

NCSL is committed to supporting the efforts of Congress and with the Administration to ensure passage of a strong child nutrition reauthorization bill with new resources and administrative simplifications. We also call upon the House to look at offsets other than the reduction in SNAP/Food Stamp benefits. The SNAP program is a critical lifeline for families swamped by the economic downturn; approximately one in eight Americans receive SNAP benefits. Thank you for considering our views on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Representative Mary Jane Wallner
Majority Leader
New Hampshire House of Representatives
Co-Chair, NCSL Standing Committee on
Human Services and Welfare

CC: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

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