

SCHOOL MEALS SUPPORT CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND LEARNING

Proposed Cuts to School Meals Would Worsen Childhood Hunger, Hurt Struggling Families, and Create Unnecessary Burdens for **284** Schools in **INDIANA**

House Budget Committee Chair Jodey Arrington (R-TX) has proposed \$12 billion in cuts to school meals programs for the 2025 budget reconciliation. The proposals would substantially decrease the number of schools eligible for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and make it harder for eligible families to apply for free or reduced-price school meals at non-CEP schools. Combined, these proposals would reduce students' access to school meals and raise families' grocery bills, while imposing unnecessary and burdensome paperwork requirements on schools in **INDIANA**.

What Is Community Eligibility?

CEP allows schools serving large numbers of children from families with low incomes to offer school meals at no charge to all students. Rather than relying on school meal applications to determine a school's federal reimbursements, CEP schools are reimbursed based on the share of students from families with low incomes, as determined through a data-matching process that identifies students' participation in other means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Currently, schools can adopt CEP if at least 25 percent of students receive these benefits.

CONGRESS MUST REJECT ANY PROPOSAL TO WEAKEN CEP

Chair Arrington's proposal would increase the CEP eligibility threshold for schools from **25** percent to **60** percent of students identified as receiving benefits. This would cut over 24,000 schools nationwide from participating in CEP and undermine the health and learning of more than **12 million children**.

Community Eligibility Supports Students, Families, and Schools

CEP is a win for students, families, and schools. CEP gives all students access to the nutritious school breakfasts and lunches they need to be well-nourished and ready to learn, while reducing the stigma often present in school cafeterias when schools have to track students' eligibility for free, reduced-price, and paid meals. **When students have access to free meals at school, families have lower grocery bills and more money in their household budgets to help make ends meet.**

CEP has grown in popularity since first becoming available nationwide over a decade ago. In the 2023–2024 school year, one out of every two schools that operated the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) participated in CEP. CEP makes school meal operations more efficient and effective: It eliminates the administrative burden associated with school meal applications, strengthens program integrity, and supports school nutrition finances by eliminating school meal debt and increasing participation in school breakfast and lunch, which allows for economies of scale.



IN 2023–2024 SCHOOL YEAR

735 SCHOOLS

in **INDIANA** — which represents **36** percent of schools that participate in the school lunch program — adopted CEP, reaching **354,967** children each school day.

The proposed cuts to school meals would **increase hardships** for children and families across **INDIANA**:



284 schools in **INDIANA** would no longer be able to provide free school meals through CEP and would have to reinstate meal applications.



78 school districts in **INDIANA**, listed on the reverse page, would be affected.



122,769 **INDIANA** children attend schools that would no longer be able to offer meals at no charge to all students through CEP.¹

Rather than reducing access to school meals, **CONGRESS SHOULD INVEST IN CEP** and reduce barriers to applying for free or reduced-price school meals, so families can afford groceries and children have access to the nutritious meals they need to thrive in school and beyond.

The following table identifies the school districts in **INDIANA**, and the number of schools and children within each district that would lose access to CEP if Congress increases the eligibility threshold to 60 percent of students identified as receiving benefits.

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
21ST CENTURY CHARTER SCHOOL @ GARY	1	223
ANDERSON COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORP	14	6435
BEECH GROVE CITY SCHOOLS	6	2774
BLACKFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS	3	1458
CANNELTON CITY SCHOOLS	3	233
CAREER ACADEMY	2	1429
CENTRAL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	1	226
CHARLES A BEARD MEMORIAL SCHOOL CORPORATION	3	1032
CLARKSVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORP	4	1362
CLAY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	10	3983
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS OF FRANKFORT	5	3001
CRAWFORD COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	5	1279
CROTHERSVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	2	411
DAMAR CHARTER ACADEMY	1	175
EAST NOBLE SCHOOL CORPORATION	6	2263
EAST WASHINGTON SCHOOL CORP	3	1377
EDINBURGH COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORP	1	394
EMAN SCHOOLS	3	369
EVANSVILLE-VANDERBURGH SCHOOLS	29	13818
FAYETTE COUNTY SCHOOL CORP	4	1121
GARY LIGHTHOUSE CHARTER SCHOOL	3	1071
HAMMOND BAPTIST SCHOOLS	1	217
HAMMOND URBAN ACADEMY	1	541
HERITAGE INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY (HIAT)	1	239
HERRON HIGH SCHOOL	1	226

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
HOLY SPIRIT SCHOOL	1	405
INDIANA HORIZON ACADEMY	2	185
ISLAMIC ACADEMY OF INDIANAPOLIS	1	100
LA PORTE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORP	11	6295
LAKELAND SCHOOL CORPORATION	5	1711
LAKEVIEW CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	1	133
LUTHERAN SOUTH UNITY SCHOOL	1	198
MARIAN HIGH SCHOOL	2	394
MAYS COMMUNITY ACADEMY	1	137
MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORP	9	5996
MISSISSINEWA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	4	2467
MITCHELL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	4	1419
MONROE CO COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORP	7	2292
MSD OF SHAKAMAK	2	649
NEIGHBORS' EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	1	146
NEW CASTLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORP	7	2936
NORTH ADAMS COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	2	999
NORTH GIBSON SCHOOL CORP	4	1859
NORTHEAST SCHOOL CORPORATION	3	789
OREGON-DAVIS SCHOOL CORP	2	505
ORLEANS COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	2	880
OTWELL MILLER ACADEMY	1	131
PAOLI COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION	2	1331
PERU COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	3	1958
PIKE COUNTY SCHOOL CORP	3	1521

The following table identifies the school districts in **INDIANA**, and the number of schools and children within each district that would lose access to CEP if Congress increases the eligibility threshold to 60 percent of students identified as receiving benefits.

(continued)

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
PORTAGE TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS	11	6949
PURDUE POLYTECHNIC HIGH SCHOOL	3	913
QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS SCHOOL	1	173
RANDOLPH CENTRAL SCHOOL CORP	3	676
RANDOLPH EASTERN SCHOOL CORP	2	912
RENSSELAER CENTRAL SCHOOL CORP	5	1649
SAINT CASIMIR SCHOOL	1	379
SCHOOL CITY OF HAMMOND	17	11811
SCOTT CO SCHOOL DIST #1	2	1305
SEYMOUR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	3	2198
SHOALS COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORP	2	697
SOUTH NEWTON SCHOOL CORP	2	815
SOUTH SPENCER CO SCHOOL CORP	4	1115
SOUTHWEST PARKE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	3	997

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
SPRINGS VALLEY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	1	393
ST JOHN BOSCO SCHOOL	1	245
ST MARK SCHOOL	1	506
ST MONICA SCHOOL	1	352
SWITZERLAND COUNTY SCHOOL CORP	4	1415
TP ACADEMY/TURNING POINT FAMILY WORSHIP CENTER	1	275
TRINITY LUTHERAN SCHOOL	1	172
UNION SCHOOL CORPORATION	2	270
VALPARAISO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	1	197
VINCENNES COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORP	7	3002
WARRICK COUNTY SCHOOL CORP	2	621
WASHINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	5	2521
WESTERN WAYNE SCHOOLS	2	752
WHITE RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	366