

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 **469** Schools in **MASSACHUSETTS**

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 **MASSACHUSETTS**.

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

1,123 SCHOOLS

in **MASSACHUSETTS** — which represents **59** percent of schools that participate in the school lunch program — adopted CEP, reaching **517,861** children each school day.

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



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



151 school districts in **MASSACHUSETTS**, listed on the reverse page, would be affected.



221,477 **MASSACHUSETTS** 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 **MASSACHUSETTS**, 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
ABBY KELLEY FOSTER REGIONAL CHARTER SCH.	3	1419
ABINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	4	2199
ACUSHNET PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	970
AGAWAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS	7	3336
AMHERST SCHOOL COMMITTEE	3	1052
AMHERST/PELHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1257
ASSABET VALLEY REGIONAL VOCATIONAL S. D.	1	1131
ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	994
ATTLEBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS	9	5938
AVON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	727
BARNSTABLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	10	4924
BELLINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS	5	1905
BENJAMIN BANNEKER CHARTER SCHOOL	1	332
BERKSHIRE ARTS/TECH CHARTER	1	366
BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1245
BEVERLY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	9	4917
BLACKSTONE-MILLVILLE REGIONAL SCHOOL	3	759
BLUE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	913
BOSTON COLLEGIATE CHARTER SCHOOL	2	698
BOSTON PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL	1	909
BOSTON RENAISSANCE CHARTER SCHOOL	1	937
BRAINTREE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	5	2031
BREWSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	1	216
BRIMFIELD ELEMENTARY	1	250
BRISTOL-PLYMOUTH REGIONAL SCHOOL DIST.	1	1298
BROOKFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	267
CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT	11	4333
CAPE COD REG'L TECH HIGH SCHOOL	1	645
CARVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE	2	1663

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
CENTRAL BERKSHIRE REGIONAL SCH DISTRICT	3	903
CHEVERUS CENTENNIAL SCHOOL	1	409
CHRISTA MCAULIFFE REGIONAL CHARTER	1	326
CLARKSBURG SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	195
CLINTON SCHOOL DEPARTMENT	3	2149
COLLAB. FOR REG. ED. SERV.& TRAINING	1	294
COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL	1	261
DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	493
DENNIS-YARMOUTH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	2878
DUDLEY-CHARLTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	427
EASTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	3	1465
EDGARTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	428
ERVING PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	125
FAIRHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS	4	1933
FALL RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS	5	622
FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL	1	125
FLORIDA SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	90
FRAMINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS	15	9298
FRANKLIN COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL	1	623
GARDNER SCHOOL COMMITTEE	4	2680
GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	789
GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	872
GLOUCESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE	9	2914
GRANBY SCHOOL COMMITTEE	2	700
GREATER FALL RIVER REGIONAL VOC	1	1388
GREATER LOWELL REGIONAL VOC TECH	1	2287
GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL VOC. DIST.	1	2071
HAWLEMONT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	95
HILL VIEW MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL	1	305

The following table identifies the school districts in **MASSACHUSETTS**, 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
HOLBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	1333
HOLLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	195
HOOSAC VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	1015
HUDSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	438
HULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	498
JUDGE BAKER GUIDANCE CENTER	1	114
LAWRENCE CATHOLIC ACADEMY INC	1	440
LEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	636
LEICESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	953
LEOMINSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS	10	6114
LOWER PIONEER VALLEY ED COLLABORATIVE	1	535
LUDLOW PUBLIC SCHOOLS	3	1993
MALIK ACADEMY	1	69
MARLBOROUGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT	7	4881
MARTHA'S VINEYARD CHARTER SCHOOL	1	180
MASHPEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	3	1452
MEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	7	3625
METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS	7	7164
MIDDLEBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS	4	2219
MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	5	4816
MILLBURY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT	3	1747
MOHAWK TRAIL REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	816
MONOMOY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	579
MONSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	3	824
MOUNT GREYLOCK REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	232
NANTUCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE	2	751
NARRAGANSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	657

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
NASHOBA VALLEY TECH HIGH SCHOOL	1	777
NAUSET REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE	2	1272
NEW HEIGHTS CHARTER SCHOOL OF BROCKTON	1	729
NEW SALEM-WENDELL REGIONAL SCH DISTRICT	1	140
NEWTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	401
NORTH ATTLEBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	293
NORTH BROOKFIELD	2	436
NORTH MIDDLESEX REG'L SCHOOL DIST	2	600
NORTHAMPTON - SMITH VOCATIONAL	1	581
NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	573
NORTHEAST METROPOLITAN REGIONAL VOC	1	1263
NORTHERN BERKSHIRE REGIONAL VOC DISTRICT	1	531
NORTHSHORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM	3	285
NORWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	8	3372
OAK BLUFFS SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	442
ORLEANS SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	156
OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP MISSION GR.	1	404
OXFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	4	1409
PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	1138
PATHFINDER REGIONAL VOC TECH HS	1	621
PEABODY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	9	4993
PETERSHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	127
PIONEER CHARTER SCHOOL OF SCI. EVERETT	2	775
PIONEER CHARTER SCHOOL OF SCI. SAUGUS	2	452
PIONEER VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	417
PLYMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE	7	3093
POPE JOHN PAULII CATHOLIC ACAD	3	1074

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(continued)

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
PROVINCETOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	103
QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	1793
QUABOAG REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	1236
QUINCY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	18	8800
ROCKLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE	5	2160
ROWE SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	69
SALEM ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL	1	487
SAUGUS SCHOOL COMMITTEE	4	2759
SEEM COLLABORATIVE	5	265
SIZER SCHOOL A NORTH CENTRAL ESSENTIAL	1	349
SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	11	4814
SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE	3	173
SOUTH HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE	5	2215
SOUTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL VOC TECH	1	830
SOUTHEASTERN REG'L SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	1553
SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE REGIONAL SCHOOL DIST.	2	538
SPENCER-EAST BROOKFIELD REGIONAL	4	1454
ST PATRICK SCHOOL	1	97
STOUGHTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	8	3644
TAUNTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	7	5000

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	248
TOWN OF EASTHAM	1	197
TRITON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	416
TRURO SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	98
UPPER CAPE COD REGIONAL VOC SCHOOL	1	754
WALES SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	89
WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS	6	3885
WATERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS	5	2701
WELLFLEET SCHOOL COMMITTEE	1	91
WEST SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	10	3999
WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	11	4778
WEYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS	9	5293
WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	910
WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECH HIGH	1	1275
WILLIAMSBURG SCHOOL DEPARTMENT	1	131
WINCHENDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	5	1256
WOBURN PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	1456
WORTHINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	72
YESHIVA ACHEI TMIMIM	1	83