

# 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 **987** Schools in **WASHINGTON**

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 **WASHINGTON**.

### 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

**1,292** SCHOOLS

in **WASHINGTON** — which represents **61** percent of schools that participate in the school lunch program — adopted CEP, reaching **579,899** children each school day.

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



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



**186** school districts in **WASHINGTON**, listed on the reverse page, would be affected.



**465,853** **WASHINGTON** children attend schools that would no longer be able to offer meals at no charge to all students through CEP.<sup>1</sup>

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 **WASHINGTON**, 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
ABERDEEN SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	2095
ANACORTES SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	84
ARLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	453
AUBURN SCHOOL DISTRICT	22	14477
BELLEVUE SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1397
BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT	11	5246
BETHEL SCHOOL DISTRICT	27	15614
BREMERTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	2077
BREWSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	948
BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	731
BRINNON SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	81
BURLINGTON - EDISON SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	2917
CAPE FLATTERY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	504
CASCADE PUBLIC SCHOOL	1	96
CASTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1393
CENTRAL KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	1913
CENTRAL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	13	4981
CENTRALIA SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	1142
CHEHALIS SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1886
CHENEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	3390
CHEWELAH SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	773
CHIEF LESCHI SCHOOL	1	634
CHIMACUM SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	677
CLARKSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	6	2060
CLOVER PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT	17	9763

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
COLLEGE PLACE SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	2430
COLUMBIA SCHOOL DISTRICT-STEVENS	1	103
COLUMBIA SCHOOL DISTRICT-WALLA WALLA	3	730
COLVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	1536
CONCRETE SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	487
COULEE-HARTLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	78
CRESTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	47
CURLEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	175
CUSICK SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	203
DARRINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	440
DAYTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	359
DEER PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	882
EAST VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT - SPOKANE	7	3151
EAST VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT - YAKIMA	5	3296
EASTMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT	8	5373
EATONVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	155
EDMONDS SCHOOL DISTRICT	8	3658
ELLENSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	1114
ELMA SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	1540
ENDICOTT SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	129
ENTIAT SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	332
EPHRATA SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	2570
EVERETT SCHOOL DISTRICT	17	11253
EVERGREEN SCHOOL DISTRICT - CLARK	35	22790
EVERGREEN SCHOOL DISTRICT - STEVENS	1	30

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(continued)

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
FEDERAL WAY SCHOOL DISTRICT	31	17709
FERNDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT	9	2971
FINLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	899
FRANKLIN PIERCE SCHOOL DISTRICT	11	6985
GLENWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	48
GOLDENDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	834
GRAND COULEE DAM SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	339
GRANDVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	1624
GRANITE FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	163
HARRINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	121
HIGHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	815
HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT	22	13371
HOQUIAM SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1040
IMPACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	589
IMPACT   COMMENCEMENT BAY ELEMENTARY	1	315
IMPACT   SALISH SEA ELEMENTARY	1	320
INCHELIUM SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	217
KAHLOTUS SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	33
KELLER SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	35
KELSO SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	3918
KENNEWICK SCHOOL DISTRICT	20	14078
KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	33	18562
KETTLE FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	719
KIONA-BENTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1421

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
KLICKITAT SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	97
LA CONNER SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	677
LAKE CHELAN SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	926
LAKE QUINAULT SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	188
LAKE STEVENS SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	268
LAKEWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1144
LAMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	27
LONGVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	10	4745
LUMMI INDIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL	1	403
LYLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	165
MANSON SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	603
MARY M KNIGHT SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	147
MARY WALKER SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	270
MARYSVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	18	9523
MEAD SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	1660
MONROE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	629
MORTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	430
MOSES LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT	11	6048
MOSSYROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	556
MOUNT BAKER SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	1564
MOUNT VERNON SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	5386
MUKILTEO SCHOOL DISTRICT	18	12535
NACHES VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1320
NASELLE-GRAYS RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	608

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(continued)

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
NEWPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	876
NOOKSACK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	1872
NORTH BEACH SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	205
NORTH FRANKLIN SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	206
NORTH MASON SCHOOL DISTRICT	6	2303
NORTH RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	82
NORTH THURSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	3658
OAKVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	304
OCEAN BEACH SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	795
OCOSTA SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	249
OKANOGAN SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1070
OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	1502
OMAK SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	413
ONALASKA SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	845
ONION CREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	37
ORONDO SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	160
OROVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	499
OTHELLO SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	1494
PASCO SCHOOL DISTRICT	17	12896
PATEROS SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	280
PE ELL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	258
PIONEER SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	691
POMEROY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	340
PORT ANGELES SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	3076
PRESCOTT SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	256

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
PRIDE PREP SCHOOLS	1	511
PROSSER SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1851
PULLMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	674
PUYALLUP SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	2814
QUILCENE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	217
QUILEUTE TRIBAL SCHOOL	1	130
QUILLAYUTE VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1050
QUINCY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	1117
RAINIER PREP	1	329
RAINIER VALLEY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (FORMERLY GREEN DOT PUBLIC SCHOOLS RAINIER VALLEY)	1	146
RAYMOND SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	520
RENTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	22	11693
REPUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	308
RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT	8	4779
RIVERSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	1380
ROCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1021
ROSALIA SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	166
ROYAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	1800
SAINT JOHN SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	66
SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	47	19081
SEDRO-WOOLLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	9	3673
SELAH SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	3666
SELKIRK SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	258
SEQUIM SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	543

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(continued)

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
SHELTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	6	3191
SHORELINE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	457
SNOHOMISH SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	533
SOAP LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	12
SOUTH BEND SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	538
SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1404
SOUTH WHIDBEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	47
SPOKANE SCHOOL DISTRICT	38	19638
SPRAGUE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	28
STARBUCK SCHOOL DISTRICT #35	1	25
STEVENSON CARSON SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	552
SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS - OLYMPUS	1	172
TACOMA SCHOOL DISTRICT	46	27054
TEKOA SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	209
TENINO SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	613
TOLEDO SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	447
TONASKET SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	296
TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL	1	103
UNION GAP SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	563
VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	232

School District	Schools Impacted	Children Impacted
VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT	34	18656
WA HE LUT INDIAN SCHOOL AGENCY	1	132
WAHKIAKUM SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	439
WAITSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	260
WALLA WALLA SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	4521
WARDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	691
WASHTUCNA SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	91
WATERVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	114
WENATCHEE SCHOOL DISTRICT	10	5745
WEST VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT-SPOKANE	9	3019
WEST VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT-YAKIMA	6	2809
WHITE PASS SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	166
WILSON CREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	123
WINLOCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	772
WISHKAH VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	149
WOODLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	52
YAKIMA SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	1676
YELM SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	1677
ZILLAH SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	1249