

April 27, 2020

The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
Chairman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Bishop and Hoeven and Ranking Members Fortenberry and Merkley:

Thank you for your diligent work on the COVID-19 relief packages. We appreciate the opportunity to provide a recommendation for the fourth package and thank you in advance for your consideration of the unique situation of school nutrition programs.

As the nation grapples with the impact of COVID-19 disruptions, school nutrition professionals are working on the frontlines to combat rising levels of food insecurity in their communities. School meal programs chose to keep workers employed, deliver meals to students with no additional reimbursement, and expose staff to the coronavirus with little to no funding for proper personal protective equipment. Many maintained fixed expenses such as salaries while taking on unanticipated expenses such as hazard pay and transportation.

School nutrition programs rely on reimbursement from meal service to pay for expenses. Last year between the months of March and June, school nutrition programs served more than 2.5 billion meals and snacks, receiving over \$5 billion in reimbursement. Now according to early reports, programs are serving only a fraction of those meals; this unanticipated loss of revenue has forced programs to tap into fund balances and draw upon lines of credit to sustain their operations. Looking to recovery, it is imperative to support these programs while protecting jobs and limited education resources. Funding must be provided to make programs financially solvent and to maintain the integrity of essential food security programs as the recovery process begins, with many more children relying on school meal programs.

**We urge Congress to provide \$2.6 billion to mitigate a portion of the estimated, significant financial loss that school nutrition programs have and will continue to experience.** We appreciate your consideration of this request.

AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK)  
Advocates for Better Children's Diets  
American Heart Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society for Nutrition  
Artisan Grain Collaborative  
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)  
Balanced  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Center for Wellness and Nutrition  
Council of the Great City Schools  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
FoodCorps  
FoodPlay Productions  
Good Food Collective  
Healthy Food America  
International Foodservice Manufacturers Association  
Jacques Pepin Foundation  
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University  
LunchAssist  
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger  
MomsRising  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Athletic Trainers' Association  
National Education Association  
National Farm to School Network  
School Nutrition Association  
Share Our Strength  
Slow Food USA  
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior  
Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
United Fresh Produce Association  
Urban School Food Alliance  
Wellness in the Schools

CC: Chairman Pat Roberts, Senate Agriculture Committee  
Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow, Senate Agriculture Committee  
Chairman Bobby Scott, House Education & Labor Committee  
Ranking Member Virginia Foxx, House Education & Labor Committee