

## Summer Meals Act of 2019

The Summer Meal Service Program, funded by USDA and run by local schools and non-profits, ensures that low-income children have access to healthy food throughout the summer, after school, and during school vacations. Most programs occur in tandem with educational and enrichment programs that keep children learning, engaged, and safe while school is out. The Summer Meals Act hopes to accomplish the following five goals:

**1) Better Integration of Summer Education and Meals Programs**

The current definition for Summer Meal Service Program requires that 50 percent of the children in the area be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, while many summer enrichment programs, like 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, have a 40% threshold. This bars many educational summer programs from participating in the summer meals program. *Our bill would reduce the Summer Food Service Program eligibility threshold from 50% to 40% so more low-income, hungry children would be able to receive meals and continue learning throughout the summer.*

**2) Reduce Red Tape for Public-Private Partnerships**

Many public agencies and private nonprofit organizations operate meal programs during the school year and in the summer, which means they must submit separate applications that have different programmatic rules. *Our bill will reduce the red tape by allowing public and private organizations to do one application so that they can more efficiently provide children meals after school, on weekends, and during school holidays.*

**3) Improve Nutrition in Rural, Underserved, Hard to Reach Areas**

*Many children in rural, under-served, and hard to reach areas cannot access a Summer Food Service Program site that provides educational enrichment and fun activities. While providing meals in conjunction with full educational programming is ideal, letting children go hungry because they cannot access such sites is not acceptable. Our bill will allow the Secretary to approve applications to use innovative transportation methods to bring kids to full-service sites, deliver meals to kids through mobile meal trucks, and any other method or approach designed to improve access to nutritional meals while school is out.*

**4) Eliminate the Need to Skip a Meal for Children of Hardworking Parents**

Many children participate in evening enrichment programs during the school year and summer months when their parents are working. *Our bill will provide the option of serving two meals and a snack or three meals so that children can continue learning throughout the afternoon.*

**5) Improve Opportunities for Meal Providers to Feed Children After Disasters**

Natural disasters often destroy or damage schools and other buildings used to provide Summer Food Service programs. Under current law, Summer Food Service Program providers may only be reimbursed for meals provided to children after a natural disaster in a non-congregate setting after the President has issued a disaster declaration, which can be delayed for a variety of reasons. *Our bill will ensure that public agencies, non-profit organizations, and schools that operate summer meal programs can provide vital nutrition to every child in the aftermath of a natural disaster while a Governor's request for a Presidential disaster declaration is pending.*