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Title: Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign the renewal of the Child Nutrition Act and the WIC Reauthorization Act

Sponsors: Ben Kallos, Margaret S. Chin, Vincent J. Gentile, Brad S. Lander, Rosie Mendez, Deborah L. Rose

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Res. No. 936

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign the renewal of the Child Nutrition Act and the WIC Reauthorization Act

By Council Members Kallos, Chin, Gentile, Lander, Mendez and Rose

Whereas, In 1946, President Harry S. Truman signed the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act into law, which created a federal school lunch program devoted to protecting the health of children throughout the country; and

Whereas, In 1966, as a result of research showing that healthy food and good nutrition increases a child’s capacity to develop and learn, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Child Nutrition Act (CNA) which complemented the existing school lunch program by creating a national school breakfast; and

Whereas, These laws were followed by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and

Whereas, While CACFP and SFSP are authorized permanently, WIC and CNA are slated for reauthorization every five years and both lapsed on September 30, 2015; and

Whereas, According to the Food Research and Action Center, a national nutrition and anti-hunger advocacy organization, the CNA made progress in 2010 by increasing the amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat/fat-free dairy products available in weekly menus, and ensuring that national nutrition standards set a minimum for healthfulness and do not restrict the ability of localities to implement even healthier standards; and

Whereas, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, childhood obesity is epidemic in the United States, with more than one third of children and adolescents overweight or obese in 2012; and

Whereas, According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), despite recent reforms and an increase in the variety of food programs, 17.4 million of U.S. households were “uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all their members” at some time during 2014 and 6.9 million of those households had very low food security, meaning normal eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake was reduced at times during the year because they had insufficient money or other resources for food; and

Whereas, In 2009, President Barack H. Obama announced a plan to eliminate domestic child hunger by 2015 through various anti-poverty and food assistance initiatives; and

Whereas, In New York City, the problem of child hunger is painstakingly clear as one in five children rely on emergency food programs, and 70 percent of all low-income households with children in New York City struggle to afford food, according to the Food Bank for New York City, a major hunger-relief organization; and

Whereas, The renewal of the CNA and the WIC would advance the President's goal of ending child hunger, ensuring access to high quality, nutritious foods, reducing obesity-related diseases, and supporting and expanding local and regional farm and food economies; and

Whereas, In 2013, the child poverty rate in New York City was 30 percent, according to Citizens' Committee for Children, and the renewal of these laws would assist these children; and

Whereas, Additionally, according to Food Bank for New York City, approximately 2.6 million New Yorkers experience difficulty affording food for themselves and their families and the renewal of these laws will improve the quality of diets and stabilize eating patterns for food insecure residents; and

Whereas, The New York City Council's (Council) priorities for the reauthorization of the CNA include providing free meals to public school children as part of their instructional day and reimbursement of meals served at the free eligibility rate in order to reduce food insecurity in New York City children and support the local economy; and

Whereas, Ensuring that the greatest number of individuals can benefit from this program is a high priority and the Council advocates for streamlining the eligibility determination and enrollment for school meals consistent with other benefit programs; and

Whereas, The federal government's biggest anti-hunger program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), was cut by billions of dollars in recent years despite its proven effectiveness; and

Whereas, The Council urges Congress to keep federally funded meals in line with current Dietary Guidelines for Americans by the USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and ensure dietary balance to promote health; and

Whereas, The Council urges Congress to protect the gains made in the 2010 Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act to increase the amount of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat/fat-free dairy products in weekly menus; and

Whereas, Accessibility to healthy foods is a major part of any nutrition program and the Council advocates for programs that develop fresh, local food for New York's families and a USDA loan guarantee assistance program to fund school kitchen infrastructure; and

Whereas, The Council recommends increasing the USDA commodity dollars apportioned to schools

from \$0.2475 to \$0.75 for every lunch served, allowing schools to obtain healthier food options; and

Whereas, According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, nearly 50% of city elementary school children are an unhealthy weight; and

Whereas, Obesity and diet-related diseases are epidemic among New York City children, therefore the Council advocates that the USDA promote, assess and disseminate nutrition education materials to schools and continue to support WIC nutrition education and breastfeeding support; and

Whereas, Lastly, the Council calls for the support and expansion of regional farm and food economies, increasing jobs, enhancing infrastructure, and reducing unsustainable environmental impact through child nutrition procurement policy; and

Whereas, CNA will be able to fulfill its mission of ensuring that children have access to healthy and nutritious foods, while considering the needs of New York City to protect some of its most vulnerable citizens; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign the renewal of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act.

CP
LS # 5689
11/30/15