



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 668

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign legislation requiring the New York City Department of Education to establish a pilot program for the purpose of providing frozen take-home meals to certain children located in the City of New York.

By Council Members Moya, Sanchez, Cabán, Riley, Ossé, Hanif and Gutiérrez

Whereas, Hunger is an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy on a regular basis to lead a normal active and healthy life, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations; and

Whereas, Per FAO, a person is food insecure when they lack regular access to safe and nutritious food for normal growth, development and an active and healthy life, due to unavailability of food or lack of resources to obtain food; and

Whereas, The World Health Organization has reported that the number of people affected by hunger globally rose to as many as 828 million in 2021, an increase of about 150 million since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas, According to the United States (U.S.) Department of Agriculture (USDA) more than 38 million people, including 12 million children in the U.S. are food insecure; and

Whereas, Food assistance programs, such as the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the Women, Infants and Children (“WIC”) program, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”), address barriers to accessing healthy food and help reduce food insecurity, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and

Whereas, According to Feeding America, a national nonprofit that is a nationwide network of more than

200 food banks that feed more than 46 million people, hunger can affect people from all walks of life, but some groups like children, seniors, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color face hunger at much higher rates; and

Whereas, For children, food insecurity is particularly devastating as not having enough healthy food can have serious implications for a child’s physical and mental health, academic achievement and future economic prosperity, according to the national campaign No Kid Hungry; and

Whereas, Disproportionate hunger among Black, Latino and Indigenous communities is a result of systemic racial injustice; and

Whereas, Per Feeding America, to achieve a hunger-free America, the root causes of hunger and structural and systemic inequities should be addressed; and

Whereas, A report from City Harvest revealed that 1 in 4 New York City (“NYC” or “City”) children do not know where their next meal will come, and many of these children depend on school meals and do not have access to regular nutritious meals; and

Whereas, The NYC Department of Education (DOE) offers free breakfast and lunch to students throughout the day, as well as afterschool meals to every child who participates in an afterschool program; and

Whereas, With more than a million students, DOE feeds more people every day than almost any other public institution in the country, according to Civil Eats, an independent, nonprofit digital news and commentary site about the American food system; and

Whereas, During the pandemic, DOE served more than 100 million meals to students and families, according to Food Management, which provides noncommercial onsite foodservice industry news and business and culinary insights to the K-12 food service; and

Whereas, According to a World Wildlife Fund report, U.S. school food waste totals 530,000 tons per year and costs as much as \$9.7 million a day to manage; and

Whereas, In New York State, food makes up about 18 percent of all waste and each year, about 3.9 million tons of wasted food ends up in landfills, while 12.8 percent of New Yorkers are food insecure, according to NYC Food Policy Center at Hunter College; and

Whereas, According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, in NYC specifically, 54 percent of the discarded food was generated in residential settings, 20 percent was generated by restaurants and the remaining percentages were generated by schools, health care settings, markets, event facilities and others; and

Whereas, Reducing food waste in schools is an important issue to consider in ensuring that all students get the food they need, while working to send less food to the landfill, according to the National Farm to School Network; and

Whereas, The Backpack Program at the Woodland Elementary School in Indiana has a program that ensures that children in need will not go hungry by taking the unused leftover cafeteria meals and turning them into individualized frozen meals for children to take home; and

Whereas, This program also cuts down on food waste and can inspire other school districts to adopt similar programs, according to The Learning Channel; and

Whereas, State legislation could require DOE to establish a pilot program for the purpose of providing frozen take-home meals to certain children located in NYC; and

Whereas, Participating schools could administer the pilot program to include, but not be limited to, making frozen take-home meals from unused and unopened leftover food and distributing them to children who have been accepted into such pilot programs; and

Whereas, The pandemic has increased food insecurity among low-income families with children and communities of color, who already face hunger at much higher rates than before the pandemic; and

Whereas, For many DOE school students, school is not just a place to learn, it is also the place where they can count on daily meals and programs that ensure they will not go hungry when they are not in school; now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign legislation requiring the New York City Department of Education to establish a pilot program for the purpose of providing frozen take-home meals to certain children located in the City of New York.

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