



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 2190

Resolution calling on the United States Congress to renew and strengthen the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act.

By The Speaker (Council Member Quinn) and Council Members Barron, Brewer, Fidler, Jackson, James, Lappin, Mark-Viverito, Mendez, Sanders Jr., Seabrook, Stewart, Weprin, White Jr. and Neslon

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, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Child Nutrition Act into law in 1966, in part, to complement the existing school lunch program by creating a national school breakfast program; and

Whereas, These major pieces of legislation symbolized the importance of keeping children safe and adequately nourished with nutritious meals, along with other programs that followed such as 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 Program); and

Whereas, According to the Food Research and Action Center, a national nutrition and anti-hunger advocacy organization, the Child Nutrition Act is slated for reauthorization every five years and most recently, in 2004, the program increased the availability of nutritious food to after-school and child care programs, provided for simplified application processes, required higher nutritional quality for school meals and mandated that schools formulate local wellness policies; and

Whereas, Despite recent reforms and an increase in the variety of food programs, far too many children and families continue to live in hunger within the United States (U.S.); and

Whereas, According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, approximately 12.6 million children live in households facing a “constant struggle against hunger” and in 2007, 13.3 million children lived in poverty; and

Whereas, Recently, President Barack H. Obama announced a plan to combat domestic hunger by eliminating 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, according to the Food Bank for New York City, a major hunger-relief organization; and

Whereas, One in four children under the age of 18 in New York City live below the federal poverty line, 50 percent higher than the national average; and

Whereas, Additionally, the Food Bank of New York City estimates that approximately 1.2 million city residents are food insecure, which indicates that these individuals experienced a reduced quality in their diet or disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake; and

Whereas, Regarding low-income students, data sources show that only two-thirds of eligible students participate in the National School Lunch Program, one-fifth in the free Universal School Breakfast Program and less than one-quarter in the SFSP; and

Whereas, Changes to the Child Nutrition Act would make significant progress towards the President’s goal of ending child hunger by 2015, ensure that all children have access to high quality and nutritious foods, reduce obesity-related diseases, as well as support and expand local and regional farm and food economies; and

Whereas, The New York City Council (Council) believes strongly that the reauthorization must also include several items which will result in reducing food insecurity and child hunger while also supporting the local economy; and

Whereas, The Council’s priorities for the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act include an increase in the reimbursement rates for meals by \$0.70 to allow healthier meals to be purchased and served; 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; and

Whereas, The Council urges Congress to pass the LUNCHES (Lowering Urban Nutrition Costs for Healthy Eating at Schools) Act, sponsored by U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, which would expand free meals to children living under 185 percent of the federal poverty line or \$40,792 for a family of four in high cost cities like New York City; and

Whereas, The Council urges Congress to pass legislation allowing schools or school districts to determine reimbursement for school meals based on estimates of eligibility rates, such as proposed by S.1343, sponsored by U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown; and

Whereas, The Council also recommends that the reauthorization allow for higher local nutritional standards, which would allow New York City to continue to exceed the federal nutritional standards; 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 support programs providing technical assistance, training, and equipment for the procurement of local foods in our schools; and

Whereas, Lastly, the Council calls for the improvement of the Women, Infants and Children ("WIC") program certification process by changing the certification process to one year for children and removing the hematology requirement for children over one and postpartum women which would reduce this burden and potential barrier of additional costs and fees; and

Whereas, Through implementing these recommendations the Child Nutrition Act 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 renew and strengthen the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act.

JM

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