



FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

May 20, 2015

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski:

On behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), a national bipartisan advocacy organization dedicated to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, I write today to thank you for introducing the bipartisan Summer Meals Act (S.613) and offer our endorsement of this legislation. By increasing access to summer meals for children, S.613 will improve child nutrition and reduce food instability for children during the summer months.

As you know, the U.S Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) helps ensure that low-income children have access to healthy food throughout the summer, when they are no longer receiving meals through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs. While most summer nutrition programs occur in tandem with educational and enrichment programs that keep children learning, engaged, and safe during the summer months, in some parts of the country children and families are not able to easily access these important sites.

The Summer Meals Act will go a long way in reducing child hunger during school breaks by updating area eligibility from 50 percent to 40 percent so communities with significant numbers of low-income, hungry children will be able to receive meals and continue to learn throughout the summer. This legislation also allows USDA to provide grants for transportation in underserved areas and to promote innovative and creative ways to increase access to summer meals. We applaud this legislation for helping SFSP sites operate more smoothly by providing sites the option of serving two meals and a snack, or three meals, so children can receive a full day worth of meals. Importantly, this legislation will also help providers operate seamlessly by allowing public and private organizations to submit one application to provide children meals after school, on weekends, and during school holidays.

Federal child nutrition programs are vital tools in protecting against hunger and providing balanced diets for our nation's children. We thank you for all that you do on behalf of children and families and appreciate you introducing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Lesley".

Bruce Lesley
President