



The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

He wanted to fix CHIP "once & for all"

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Sen. Manchin gets another chance

Concerned about the deficit? What's better than a free program?

Sens. Schumer and Manchin announced their late-breaking reconciliation package yesterday, a deal that invests \$300 billion in deficit reduction, \$370 billion in climate issues, extends the expanded Affordable Care Act through 2025, and allows Medicare to negotiate for prescription drugs and lower health care costs for millions of (older) Americans.

Yay for all of those. But what the lawmakers overlooked was **one of the most efficient, cost-effective delivery systems of health care this country has**. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) as currently structured **costs nothing**, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Making the program **permanent right now** — as both [Democrats](#) and [Republicans](#) have suggested — would simultaneously thwart the program's out-year funding cliff and protect the health care of 10 million children (including [roughly 20,000 in West Virginia](#)).

Funding for Medicare is already permanent. Ditto for veterans' health. And the care that members of Congress receive. In fact, the only federal health insurance program that is NOT permanent — meaning that it must be reapproved every few years — is CHIP. We understand that there's still room in

the bill for other items. And there's a certain senator who has said he wants to fix CHIP "once & for all":



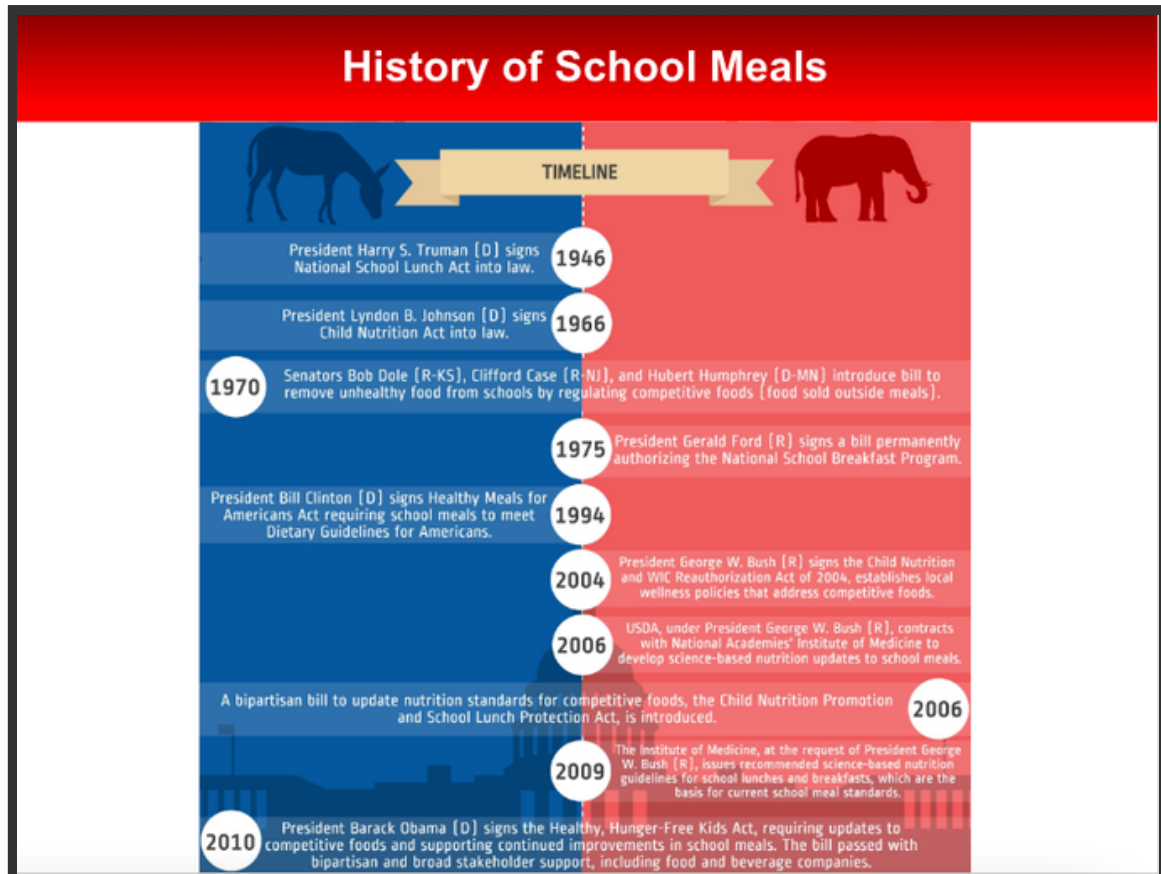
The year of child nutrition

Looks like lawmakers are finally giving child nutrition a platform this year, with several opportunities on the legislative and regulatory agenda for advocates to weigh in. During a briefing by First Focus on Children and The Education Trust this week, experts outlined the following opportunities:

- **Child Nutrition Reauthorization:** The introduction of the [Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act](#), marks the first time in 12 years that Congress has a chance to update and modernize federal child nutrition programs that reach millions of children, such as WIC and the School Lunch Program.
- **Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health:** First Focus, Ed Trust and 30 other organizations [sent a letter](#) to the White House urging planners to prioritize children and youth at its September conference on hunger, nutrition and health — **the first one since 1969.**
- **USDA will reinforce nutrition standards for school meals:** The Department of Agriculture plans to issue a **durable rule on the nutrition**

standards that schools must meet, a move that will ensure that school meals meet the required nutritional quality and dietary guidelines. Schools are currently operating under a transitional rule, aimed at helping them continue to recover from the pandemic. First Focus on Children outlines the necessity of this rule in [a comment to the department](#).

“It is just so abundantly clear that we need to improve our children's overall diet and health,” USDA Deputy Undersecretary Stacy Dean said during the briefing. Watch the full briefing [at this link](#).



Items of note

Democratic Sens. Patty Murray and Ron Wyden launched an investigation into [child abuse allegations at residential treatment centers](#). They have asked four major companies to deliver information to them by Aug. 4. [More here](#).

Lawmakers have introduced [one of the first pieces of Congressional legislation to explicitly include a “best interests of the child” standard for federal policy](#), a standard that First Focus on Children has championed since our founding in 2005. The Children’s Safe Welcome Act would ensure the safety of migrant children crossing the U.S. border.

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