

April 27, 2016

By Email

Patrick Hester, Legislative Assistant
Office of Congresswoman Elise Stefanik
512 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Amendments to the House Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill

Dear Mr. Hester,

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy is a statewide, nonprofit, policy analysis and advocacy organization working to shape policies that improve health, welfare and human services in New York State. Our priorities focus on interventions designed to improve the lives of young children and their families because stressors like poverty, poor nutrition and food insecurity can affect their health and well-being for the rest of their lives. Our President and CEO, Kate Breslin, was among a handful of individuals invited to submit testimony when the National Commission on Hunger came to New York State in May 2015. Her testimony is attached.

We are writing to thank Representative Stefanik for introducing and tirelessly supporting the **Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act (H.R. 3866)**, which would expand access to nutritious meals for young children by making improvements to the **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**. We are concerned that the **House Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill (H.R.5003)** does not include H.R. 3866's provision to authorize an additional meal or snack for young children who must attend childcare for more than eight hours. Omitting this additional snack or meal will cause real hardship to the thousands of low-income young children who rely on CACFP-funded meals and snacks at childcare for a substantial portion of their daily nutritional intake.

As you know, it is well-documented that inadequate nutrition in children can lead to poor health, educational and developmental outcomes, particularly for very young children. During this period, children's brains are developing rapidly, and poor nutrition can harm their cognitive development and in some cases, permanently change the architecture of their brain. It is also well-understood that young children require small meals more frequently. Thus, the inclusion of an additional meal or snack under CACFP is essential to ensuring that the young children that rely on CACFP receive adequate daily nutrition.

We also are concerned about the many aspects of H.R. 5003 that will lead to fewer low-income school-aged children receiving free and reduced-cost meals at school. **We therefore urge Representative Stefanik to continue her efforts to strengthen CACFP by advocating for substantial amendments to HR 5003, including, but not limited to, amendments to (1) add an additional snack to CACFP for children in child care for long hours; (2) strengthen the Community Eligibility Provision; (3) reform the cumbersome verification provisions; and (4) allow school districts to conduct effective outreach to needy families. If H.R. 5003 is not substantially amended, we ask Representative Stefanik to vote no on H.R. 5003.**

We appreciate Representative Stefanik's leadership on this issue and her efforts to ensure that the nation's most vulnerable young children are well nourished. Schuyler Center stands ready to work with Representative Stefanik to build support for a bill that strengthens CACFP and helps to nourish the nation's children. We also look forward to working with you in the future on other issues that will help all of New York's children have the best opportunity to thrive.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy (Dede) Hill
Director of Policy