

## ICYMI: Adams Applauds Bipartisan, Bicameral Agreement to Extend School Nutrition Waivers



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## ICYMI: Adams Applauds Bipartisan, Bicameral Agreement to Extend School Nutrition Waivers

**WASHINGTON** - Today, **Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12)** applauded a bipartisan agreement to extend school nutrition waivers for school systems across the United States. The pandemic-era waivers are set to expire on June 30.

“I applaud the bipartisan agreement to extend school nutrition waivers because no student or child should ever go hungry in our country,” **said Congresswoman Adams**. “Food security is one of my top priorities in Congress because proper nutrition and public education work together to enrich young minds and bodies, and to prepare students to succeed later in life. Given the reality of higher prices at the grocery store, children and their families can’t afford to lose the free, nutritious meals available at schools across our country. While the legislation is far from perfect, without this agreement to extend school nutrition waivers, many students would have faced a hunger crisis over the summer.”

Tuesday afternoon, House Education and Labor Committee Chairman Bobby Scott (VA-03) and Ranking Member Virginia Foxx (NC-05), along with Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Ranking Member John Boozman (R-AR), announced an agreement to help school and

summer providers keep kids fed. The ***Keep Kids Fed Act*** will provide important funding and flexibility for communities to provide children healthy meals this summer and provide support to schools and daycares to respond to supply chain challenges and high food costs for the coming school year.

[Bill text is available here.](#)

[An explanation of the bill's provisions is available here.](#)

### **Background**

Beginning in March of 2020, the United States Congress granted waivers guaranteeing all K-12 students and school-aged children free school breakfast and lunch regardless of a family's income or a school's Title I eligibility. The waivers also gave schools flexibility and funding to deliver healthy, nutritious school meals to their students. Unfortunately, legislation to extend the waivers fell apart in March, and schools have been preparing for a "hunger cliff" when the waivers expire in 9 days on June 30.

Last week, after months of advocacy, [Rep. Adams addressed the United States House of Representatives](#), urging her colleagues to take action on this issue.

Video of the speech is [available on YouTube here](#) and [for download here](#).

Adams serves as vice chair of the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture. "Hunger" is one of Adams' "4H" legislative priorities in Congress that include Higher Education, Healthcare, and Housing. Her signature food security legislation, the ***Closing the Meal Gap Act***, has [107 cosponsors in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress](#).

### **Keep Kids Fed Act of 2022 (H.R. 8150)**

Children need healthy meals to learn and grow. Children in food insecure households have a higher risk of being hospitalized in early childhood and suffering from chronic diseases, such as asthma. For adolescents, food insecurity is linked to mental health issues, such as depression and suicidal ideation.

Even before the pandemic, too many children did not have access to healthy food. In 2018, nearly 1 in every 7 households with children struggled to put enough food on the table. Just weeks into the pandemic, more than 1 in every 3 households with children and nearly half of all mothers with young children struggled with food insecurity.

In response, Congress took action to help address and prevent child hunger—including through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Specifically, this bill provided the U.S. Department of Agriculture with the flexibility it needed to expand eligibility for school meals and address the challenges of serving students who were not physically present in school buildings.

Unfortunately, Congress did not extend the key flexibilities provided to the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). Yet, schools are still grappling with the impact of the pandemic, such as rising food costs and ongoing supply chain issues. If Congress fails to

extend certain flexibilities under FFRCA, they will expire on June 30, 2022, potentially stripping millions of students of access to healthy meals.

### **The Solution**

The *Keep Kids Fed Act of 2022* extends flexibilities provided through FFCRA and ensures that schools can continue to provide meals for students.

Specifically, the bill:

- Provides nationwide waiver authority for school meal flexibilities that do not increase costs;
- Allows waivers related to the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) during the summer months;
- Increases reimbursement rates for the 2022-2023 school year by an additional 15 cents per breakfast and 40 cents per lunch; and
- Provides enhanced support to the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP).

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