



House Reauthorization Bill Fails to Provide Needed Improvements

Wednesday, the House Education and Workforce Committee released a deeply flawed child nutrition reauthorization bill. “Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act of 2016” (H.R. 5003). Despite strong opposition to the bill from the National CACFP Forum and more than 750 other national, state, and local organizations representing a broad range of interests and advocacy areas, the measure was approved by the Committee.

The bill fails to meet the needs of children in child care and out-of-school time settings, and it reduces access to school meals for children from low-income families. The bill contains a number of very damaging provisions including a three state school meal block grant which would limit funding and eliminate guaranteed access for children. This bill would result in countless low-income children no longer having access to the nutritious meals they need for their health and learning. These provisions vastly outweigh the modest improvements.

Summary of CACFP Provisions

- **No provision for an additional meal or snack from children in care for long hours.** This bill fails to meet the nutritional needs for children in care for long hours. The House bill does not reflect the provision included in the Senate bill that allows child care centers and homes the option of serving an additional snack to children in care for long hours.

There was one last try to get the additional snack in the bill. Representative Bonamichi (R-NY) introduced an amendment to include the additional snack in the bill but the committee voted it down.

Concerning provisions included in the bill:

- Unnecessary and duplicative annual budget reporting requirements are created for sponsors.
- A problematic new requirement is created for all CACFP programs, whereby any “findings,” or errors they have been cited for, would be turned over to Health and Human Services (HHS). This could have a chilling effect on CACFP participation because it forces State CACFP agencies – and, in some cases, sponsoring organizations of afterschool programs and family child care homes – to report all findings, regardless of magnitude, to other agencies in the state.
- Directs USDA to work with HHS to improve the health and safety oversight and monitoring for the CACFP including by issuing guidance to States to reduce duplicative monitoring and oversight practices among CACFP and child care programs.
- Eliminates CACFP start-up and expansion funds, which support the development of quality child care with good nutrition through CACFP in rural and low-income areas.

Important provisions included in the bill:

- Eligibility is simplified for proprietary (for-profit) child care centers by permitting centers to certify eligibility every four months instead of every month.
- A carry-over option of funds from year-to-year is provided for organizations sponsoring child care centers and afterschool programs in CACFP.
- Extends the paperwork reduction workgroup.
- USDA is mandated to review the CACFP serious deficiency process (the process by which sponsors are cited for errors) and issue guidance, or as appropriate, regulations, to assure a clear and fair system.
- USDA is directed to provide technical assistance on special dietary needs, including food allergies and religious restrictions.
- USDA is required to encourage CACFP institutions to engage with state agencies, school districts and schools to access donated commodity foods.
- Eligibility is expanded for CACFP to schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Residential Child Care Institutions.
- “Legal guardian” is added, in addition to “parent,” as the recipients of easily accessible WIC outreach materials.
- Nutrition education is provided for parents and participants that will emphasize the relationship between nutrition, physical activity, and health.

Outside School Hours Care CACFP provisions:

- Provides a weak year-round streamlining option that some states could choose to offer allowing summer food programs to receive CACFP rates and depending on the state plan some administrative streamlining.

The National CACFP Forum will continue to work with Sponsors, child care centers, hours and afterschool programs to secure the additional needed CACFP changes through this reauthorization process. We join with our partners in calling on leaders of both parties in Congress and the White House to work together to legislate improvements to the child nutrition programs, not changes that will hurt children by reducing their access to nutritious meals.

For a full summary of the House Education and Workforce committee bill, “Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act of 2016” see FRAC’s reauthorization webpage. <http://frac.org/frac-analysis-of-the-house-education-workforce-committees-majority-child-nutrition-reauthorization-bill-2/>