No child should ever go hungry. Yet far too many California children continue to face food insecurity, which has been exacerbated by severe health and economic effects of the pandemic and unprecedented food inflation: 27% of California households with children are food insecure, with deep disparities for Black (32%) and Latine (34%) families.

Critical Child Nutrition Investments are Needed
California made history by becoming the first state in the nation to enact healthy school meals for all, ensuring all children can receive two meals at school at no cost that are free of shame, stigma, and school meal debt. We applaud Congress for allocating funds and providing the opportunity for states to enroll in the new permanent Summer EBT (SUN Bucks) program, a longtime California priority. Summer EBT is a crucial, for ensuring children have reliable, year-round access to nourishing meals. However, the end of Pandemic EBT and SNAP Emergency Allotments cut a third of the federal nutrition safety net.

Investments in child nutrition should never come at the expense of SNAP. The 117th Congress enacted Summer EBT, but offset the cost of this historic expansion by ending SNAP Emergency Allotments prematurely, precipitating a hunger cliff for 5 million Californians, including 1.8 million children. Congress must fight to strengthen the safety net, build on key advances enacted during COVID-19, and protect the nutrition programs that ensure the wellbeing of our children.

Key Legislation to Advance a Hunger-Free Future for All Children
- **Universal School Meals Program Act** (H.R. 3204 Omar / S. 1568 Sanders)
  - Provides school breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students
  - Increases school meal reimbursement to match USDA’s 2019 study recommendations
  - Provides up to three meals and a snack for young children in childcare

- **School Meals Expansion Act** (H.R. 2567 McGarvey)
  - Advances school meals for all nationwide, with outsized impact in California
  - Increases the multiplier for federal reimbursement from 1.6 to 2.5

- **No Hunger Kids in Schools Act** (H.R. 3112 Porter and Aguilar)
  - Creates a statewide Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) option to prevent child hunger and support schools
  - Permanently increases the federal reimbursement level for all free, reduced-price, and paid-rate school meals

- **Healthy Meals Help Kids Learn Act** (H.R. 1269 McGovern / S. 3093 Heinrich)
  - Permanently increases the federal reimbursement level for all free, reduced-price, and paid-rate school meals
  - Eliminates reduced-priced breakfast and lunch, sets poverty level for free lunch to 200% of FPL
  - Permanent direct certification for children receiving Medicaid benefits
  - Increase of CEP Multiplier to 2.5

- **Expanding Access to School Meals Act** (H.R. 3113 Porter)
  - Advances reduced-priced breakfast and lunch, sets poverty level for free lunch to 200% of FPL
  - Permanent direct certification for children receiving Medicaid benefits
  - Increase of CEP Multiplier to 2.5

- **The School Hunger Elimination Act**, which is being introduced by Sens. Casey and Sen. Fetterman (D-PA).
  - Increases federal funding for community eligibility schools and creates a statewide community eligibility option
  - Provides retroactive reimbursement for meals served to children

“Kids — [when] they’re hungry, you can’t actually veto the idea to give them food. So that is why most of our expenses are actually going to groceries, when the benefits ended. And that is one of the reasons why I actually got a second job.” — CalFresh Recipient
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