

December 9, 2014

Subject: Co-sponsor the Stop Child Summer Hunger Act of 2014

The undersigned California-based organizations are writing to express our united support for H.R. 5242 / S. 2366, a bill that has the power to significantly decrease child hunger during the summer months. We are a diverse group of organizations from across the state of California representing anti-hunger, public health, social service, direct service, and education. We have come together to ask our California Senators and Representatives to co-sponsor the *Stop Child Summer Hunger Act of 2014* and to maintain support when this topic is discussed and debated in the 2015 Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act.

In a nation with as many resources as the United States, we expect that our children spend their summer days learning, growing, and playing – not worrying about when and where they'll have their next meal. Yet, each summer, millions of kids in California and across the country have uncertain access to an absolutely essential resource: nutritious meals. Our children deserve better and we look to you to help ensure that all kids have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential. Children must have access to nutritious meals, regardless of the season, in order to be and achieve their very best.

In 2013, nearly 2 million Californian kids who benefitted from federally funded, free or reduced-price lunches during the school year missed out on similar lunches during the summer. Even more worrisome, at least 2 million families with children in California struggle with food insecurity (the inability to consistently afford enough food).

Representative Susan Davis of California / Senator Patty Murray of Washington has introduced the Stop Child Summer Hunger Act (H.R. 5242 / S. 2366), a policy solution that fills in the gap in access to nutritious meals during the summertime. H.R. 5242 / S. 2366 would expand access to a summer nutrition model that has been proven effective: the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) for Children. In its test phase, Summer EBT eliminated the most severe form of food insecurity by one-third and reached up to 75 percent of eligible children. Children who participated in Summer EBT also ate more fruits and vegetables and whole grains, as well as fewer added sugars from sweetened beverages.

Summer EBT would complement the federal summer meal programs that are currently operating at sites in California and throughout the nation. When and where these sites are able to reach kids, they provide a tremendous service. However, over 80 percent of low-income California kids who benefit from much-needed school meals are not served by summer meal sites. The congregate feeding approach on its own is unlikely to meet the nutritional needs of all children in need, particularly those who face transportation issues or other barriers that impede their access to summer meal sites.

Not one child in this land of plenty should go without enough food. The Summer EBT for Children demonstration serves as a model for providing summertime nutrition assistance – beyond congregate meals – for all children in need. Please join Representative Davis and Senator Murray in taking a stand against childhood hunger.

Sincerely,

Alameda County Community Food Bank
Association of California School Administrators
California Association of Food Banks
California Child Care Resource and Referral Network

California Emergency Foodlink
California Food Policy Advocates
Children Now
Children's Defense Fund-California
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Advocates
Community Action Partnership of Kern County
Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino
Feeding America San Diego
Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano
Food Bank of Santa Barbara County
Food Bank of Yolo County
Food for People
Hunger Action Los Angeles
Hunger Advocacy Network
Imperial Valley Food Bank
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California
Mission Community Market
North Coast Opportunities
OC Food Access Coalition
Orange County Food Bank
Orange County Hunger Coalition
Redwood Empire Food Bank
Roots of Change
San Diego Food Bank
San Diego Hunger Coalition
San Francisco-Marin Food Bank
Second Harvest Food Bank Orange County
Second Harvest Food Bank San Joaquin & Stanislaus
Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Clara & San Mateo
Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz
The Resource Connection Food Bank
Western Center on Law and Poverty
Western Regional Advocacy Project
Women Organizing Resources, Knowledge and Services (WORKS)
Yuba-Sutter Gleaners Food Bank, Inc.