

June 25, 2014

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand

United States Senate

478 Russell Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20501

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski

United States Senate

709 Hart Senate Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Gillibrand and Murkowski:

I am writing on behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), a national bipartisan advocacy organization dedicated to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, to thank you for introducing the bipartisan Summer Meals Act.

As you know, the U.S Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) helps ensure that low-income children have access to healthy food throughout the summer. Most summer nutrition programs occur in tandem with educational and enrichment programs that keep children learning, engaged, and safe during the summer months.

During the school year, low-income children have the opportunity to receive free- or reduced-priced meals at school, but with out access to the summer nutrition programs some children are forced go without meals during summer breaks. Many local and community groups do a great job of reaching hungry children through the SFSP sites, but in some parts of the country children and families are not able to easily access these important sites.

Children shouldn't go hungry just because the school year has ended. The Summer Meals Act will go a long way in reducing child hunger during school breaks by updating the area eligibility from 50% to 40% so that communities with significant numbers of low-income, hungry children will be able to receive meals and continue to learn throughout the summer. This legislation also allows USDA to provide grants for transportation in underserved areas and to promote innovative and creative ways to increase access to summer meals.

We applaud this legislation for helping SFSP sites operate more smoothly by providing sites the option of serving two meals and a snack, or three meals, so that children can continue learning throughout the afternoon without going hungry. This legislation will also help sites

operate seamlessly by allowing public and private organizations to submit one application so that they can provide children meals after school, on weekends, and during school holidays.

Federal child nutrition programs are vital tools in protecting against hunger and providing balanced diets for our nation's children. We thank you for all that you do on behalf of children and families and appreciate you introducing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Lesley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent underline under the word "Lesley".

Bruce Lesley

President

First Focus Campaign for Children