**Summer Legislation Proposed for Child Nutrition Reauthorization**

The Child Nutrition Programs are up for reauthorization at the end of September, and three bills have been introduced to address summer hunger. Each bill takes a very different approach. One focuses on program improvements to the Summer Nutrition Programs; one provides funding through a Summer EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) card to provide additional nutritional resources for low-income families; and one provides states the option to implement a Summer EBT and/or an option for children to consume meals at home or “off-site.”

Summaries of the three bills follow. The Afterschool Alliance strongly supports the first bill below S. 613 the Summer Meals Act as it would strengthen the existing connection between summer learning programs and summer nutrition programs: providing children a safe setting and opportunity to learn and grow in addition to a nutritious meal. However in cases where a program is not accessible, the solution offered by the Stop Child Summer Hunger Act of 2015 (S. 1539) acts as a complement to S. 613 and provides an alternate method of getting food to children.

To send a letter of support for the Summer Meals Act to your Senator or Representative, click [here](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Issue-Nutrition-and-Meals.cfm). To view the list of over 1,500 organizations that have endorsed the Summer Meals Act, click [here](http://frac.org/pdf/endorsed_summer_meals_act2015.pdf).

**Summer Meals Act of 2015 (**[**S. 613**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/613)**,** [**H.R. 1728**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1728?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22summer+meals+act%22%5D%7D)**)**

Introduced by Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK); and Representatives Don Young (R-AK) and Rick Larsen (D-WA)

This bill invests in the existing Summer Nutrition Programs, which require food to be served at a site, such as at a school, Boys and Girls Club, Y, park, community center, or religious institution. Over 90 percent of the sites provide programming or enrichment activities in addition to meals. The programs operate in rural, suburban and urban communities, and the improvements proposed in the Summer Meals Act would expand the number of children receiving summer meals at sites and improve program operations.

The Summer Meals Act:

* Allows community-based sponsors to feed children year-round seamlessly through one program - the summer food program, which will dramatically reduce paperwork and increase children’s access to meals at out-of-school time programs year-round (currently afterschool programs must operate through a separate program);
* Allows all sites to serve a third meal or two meals and a snack (most are limited to two meals) which is important for programs that operate for a full day and sites that have programs for kids during the day and teens at night;
* Lowers the current area eligibility criteria so that sites can operate in areas with 40 percent of the children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals (as opposed to the current threshold of 50 percent). This would be particularly effective in rural areas and would streamline the eligibility for summer meals with federal education funding for summer programs, like 21st CCLC.
* Provides funding for transportation grants in underserved areas.

To send a letter of support for the Summer Meals Act to your Senator or Representative, click [here](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Issue-Nutrition-and-Meals.cfm). To view the list of over 1,500 organizations that have endorsed this legislation, click [here](http://frac.org/pdf/endorsed_summer_meals_act2015.pdf).

**Stop Child Summer Hunger Act of 2015 (**[**S. 1539**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1539?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22stop+child+summer+hunger%22%5D%7D)**,** [**H.R. 2715**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/2715?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22stop+child+summer+hunger%22%5D%7D)**)**

Introduced by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Representative Susan Davis (D-CA)

This bill provides nutritional resources to families with children qualified to receive free or reduced-price school meals using a Summer EBT card and would complement the Summer Food Service Program by providing nutrition when a program site is inaccessible.

The Stop Summer Child Hunger Act:

* Provides funding for a Summer EBT card through SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) to children who are certified to receive free and reduced price school meals and allows children who are not certified to apply for the benefit beginning in 2017.
* Offers benefits of $150 per summer to each eligible child nationwide to purchase food in all stores, including Farmers Markets that accept SNAP.
* Requires school districts to provide information on making healthy food choices and maximizing resources to families receiving the Summer EBT card.

**Hunger-Free Summer for Kids Act 2015 (**[**S. 1966**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1966/text)**)**

Introduced by Senators John Boozman (R- AR), Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Mark Kirk (R-IL), Sherrod Brown(D-OH), Michael Bennett (D-CO), and Joe Donnelly (D-IN).

This bill gives states the option to provide nutritional resources through a Summer EBT card through the WIC program and the option to allow meals to be sent home with children or delivered to their homes instead of consumed at a summer food site. There are concerns that this legislation would create a disincentive to programs seeking to expand summer learning sites to rural areas, and could make it difficult for summer learning programs to continue to procure meals from foodbanks.

The bill:

* Provides funding for a Summer EBT card of $30 per month for a maximum of $100 for the year to children in rural areas or in areas that do not qualify for the 50 percent area eligibility requirement. To qualify, the child must be certified to receive free or reduced-school meals and must apply for the benefit.
* This Summer EBT card would operate through WIC—usable only at WIC stores to purchase certain prescribed foods—and allows a maximum of 2.5 percent of the benefit to be used for the administrative costs of running the program.
* This option would become available in 2018 in the states that have implemented WIC EBT. Currently, 10 states have implemented WIC EBT. All states are required to implement WIC EBT by 2020, but some states are behind schedule. Click here to see each state’s progress on implementing WIC EBT. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-ebt-activities>
* Allows for “off-site consumption of meals” in the same areas that Summer EBT can be given out and in areas with extreme heat or security issues, as well as at sites that provide only one meal a day or that operate for four days or less.
* States would develop a plan to use Summer EBT or non-congregate, but cannot do both options in the same community.