

August 5, 2015

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry  
328A Russell  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry  
328A Russell  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow,

The below signed groups work with state and local organizations and agencies that operate summer and afterschool programs for millions of low-income children and teens in every state in the country. The upcoming Child Nutrition Reauthorization process provides an important opportunity to increase low-income children's access to nutritious meals while attending summer learning and afterschool programs that keep children active, learning and safe when school is out of session.

Out of school time programs help level the playing field for low-income children. They combat summer learning loss and support academic achievement, increase social and emotional skills, curb obesity, support working families and provide a safe environment for children during the summer and after school. Local programs rely on the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program to maximize the positive impact on the children served, and the meals play an important role in increasing attendance and participation at summer learning and afterschool programs.

In the upcoming Child Nutrition Reauthorization, we ask that Congress invest in the Summer and Afterschool Nutrition Programs in ways that increase low-income children's access to nutritious meals and programming in a manner that strengthens and protects the existing Summer and Afterschool Nutrition Programs. Specifically, we call on Congress to support the following:

- The bipartisan, bicameral Summer Meals Act of 2015 (s.613/H.R.1728), introduced by Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Representatives Don Young (R-AK) and Rick Larsen (D-WA) which includes important improvements that will increase low-income children's access to summer and afterschool meals at educational and enrichment programs by streamlining program operations; aligning the eligibility requirements with eligibility for federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers funding for summer and afterschool programs for

low-income children; providing funding for transportation during the summer; and allowing all sites to serve a third meal during the summer.

- The Summer and Afterschool Nutrition Programs provide funding for meals served to children at congregate feeding sites. All afterschool meal sites provide education and enrichment activities for children, and over 90 percent of summer meal sites do as well. We ask that any additional summer or afterschool feeding options included in the upcoming reauthorization do not in any way negatively impact the existing structure of or eligibility for the Summer and Afterschool Nutrition Programs.

Investing in the partnership between learning and healthy meals deepens the return on both investments, and ensures that children get these vital resources in one place. When school is out, millions of children participate in learning programs, enrichment, recreation activities and other structured opportunities. Schools, recreation centers, libraries, and community-based organizations currently act as Summer and Afterschool Meal sites, and more sites would be able to provide low-income children healthy meals with the right child nutrition investments.

Sincerely,

Afterschool Alliance

After-School All-Stars

Boys and Girls Clubs of America

National Afterschool Association

National Recreation and Parks Association

National Summer Learning Association

YMCA of the USA

CC: Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee