

June 22, 2010

The Honorable George Miller
U.S. House of Representatives
2205 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

The National Women's Law Center strongly supports the Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act and its provisions to improve the highly effective Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). CACFP ensures that low-income children nationwide have access to healthy snacks and meals that they would be otherwise unable to receive. Currently, over 3 million children obtain the majority of their daily nutrition through CACFP. Passage of the Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act would help ensure that even more children would benefit from this important program and that its benefits would be strengthened for children already participating.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program allows children to receive up to two meals and a snack each day in child care centers, family child care homes, or Head Start programs. Studies have shown that children in child care programs participating in CACFP eat more nutritious meals, have fewer servings of fats and sweets, and benefit from better quality care, than children in non-participating institutions.

CACFP is more important than ever with the spike in childhood hunger. Nearly one in every four children today is struggling with hunger according to a recent report from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). For many children, the meals they eat in child care programs are the most nutritious meals they eat all week. Good nutrition is critically important for all children and particularly essential for children from birth to age five while their brains are rapidly developing. CACFP is also the first line of defense to prevent obesity and to promote good eating habits.

The pilot program for CACFP included in the Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act is a particularly important provision of the bill. By providing funding for five states to offer a second snack or dinner through CACFP, the Act recognizes that millions of children spend considerable hours in child care settings and need to be able to eat healthy meals and snacks throughout the entire day. Additionally, the simplification of the program's paperwork requirements as well as the additional reimbursement to sponsors should encourage more programs to participate in CACFP and allow more children to benefit from CACFP's critical services.

The bill's provisions to encourage even healthier meals and snacks are also important to ensure that our youngest children develop sound eating habits and receive the nutrition they

need to develop and thrive. However, in order to implement these provisions as well as additional nutritional requirements that will soon be put in place for CACFP, it will be essential to ensure that child care providers and programs receive the reimbursements necessary to support the increased costs of meeting these meal and snack requirements. We hope to work with the Committee in the near future to secure the funds necessary to implement the increase to ensure that providers can meet these additional requirements.

We look forward to working with you to ensure passage of this critical legislation that would make needed improvements in CACFP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joan Entmacher". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Joan Entmacher
Vice-President, Family and Economic Security

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Helen Blank". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Helen Blank
Director, Leadership and Public Policy