

# STATE OF KANSAS

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 241 SOUTH  
TOPEKA, KS 66612



PHONE: (785) 296-3232  
GOVERNOR.KANSAS.GOV

## GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

June 8, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Room H-305, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Room H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell:

I am writing to urge you to take immediate action to extend the federal Child Nutrition Waivers that are set to expire on June 30, 2022. Over the last two years, these waivers have proven vital to Kansas schools' ability to provide healthy and accessible meals to our students. Our schools and food service administrators have seen unprecedented challenges during this period—from rapidly rising costs to supply chain disturbances. Without the extension of these waivers, these challenges will be further exacerbated—making it harder for our children to receive nutritious meals.

The federal Child Nutrition Waivers have provided essential relief to our schools and guaranteed access to meals during both the school year and the summer months to our students. Since they were established by Congress in 2020, these waivers have provided school lunches at no additional cost to 30 million students. If allowed to expire, almost 10 million of those students will lose access to a guaranteed food source. That will include many Kansas students. In our state, over 120,000 kids are food insecure, yet 40% of them do not traditionally qualify for federal school nutrition programs.<sup>1</sup> The statistics are clear: without an extension of these waivers more Kansas kids are going to go hungry, hurting their ability to succeed both in and out of the classroom. If we want our students to excel, we need to start by ensuring that they have reliable access to nutritional meals.

For our schools, the federal Child Nutrition Waivers have made it easier to efficiently respond to challenges and get food to students. I have heard from food services directors across Kansas that the expiration of these waivers is going to cause significant disruptions to their operations and negatively impact their students. These school nutrition professionals have reported rapidly increasing program costs,

---

<sup>1</sup> Feeding America, Child Food Insecurity in the United States, 2019.

Letter to Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell  
Re: Expiring Child Nutrition Waivers  
June 8, 2022  
Page 2 of 2

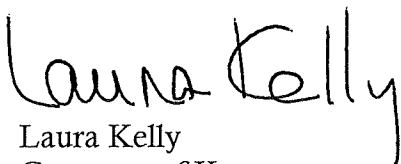
frequent delivery delays that impact their ability to comply with meal patterns, and supply shipments arriving without items they have ordered. These professionals have spent the last few years operating in an uncertain environment, always adapting to food shortages.

What I'm hearing is supported by the data: The United States Department of Agriculture has found that between 91- 95% of Kansas School Food Authorities are experiencing significant supply chain challenges.<sup>2</sup> These challenges are more frequent in large or rural public schools, which serve the vast majority of Kansas students, and are only getting worse. When classes begin in the fall, our school cafeterias will be required to meet pre-pandemic requirements that are no longer feasible given current supply chain challenges. Allowing these waivers to expire while these challenges persist will only make it harder for schools to feed our children.

Most critically as we enter summer, Kansas schools are concerned with the expiration of the Seamless Summer Option Waiver. Nationally, nearly 90% of School Food Authorities are using this waiver to provide summer meals to students. With the expiration of this waiver, some school districts will no longer be able to serve summer meals to students. The timing of this expiration is concerning because we know that the hunger crisis gets worse over summer months when children are not in school.

The failure to extend the federal Child Nutrition Waivers will be catastrophic for families and students across the country. No child should go hungry because we cannot work across the aisle to solve challenges. I urge you to come together to extend these waivers and ensure that our students have continued access to quality, nutritious meals.

Respectfully,



Laura Kelly  
Governor of Kansas

cc: The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, Department of Agriculture  
The Honorable Miguel Cardona, Secretary, Department of Education

---

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, "Results of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service-Administered School Food Authority Survey on Supply Chain Disruptions, March 2022.