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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND LABOR

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
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June 16, 2021

Gavin Newsom  
Governor  
State of California  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

As members of the California Congressional delegation, we write in support of universal school meals programs. If California were to implement the Legislative Budget Proposal recently passed by both chambers, California would become the first state to enact a vital state-wide Universal School Meal Program for Breakfast and Lunch and a grant program to support the purchase and preparation of locally grown food.

In California, every child has the right to a free education, regardless of income. Yet, while we know that good nutrition supports classroom learning, schools are required to implement out-of-date and bureaucratic applications to determine financial need before serving a child a meal. Under these policies, we miss the opportunity to maximize federal match drawdowns and to increase local economic impact through the purchase and preparation of meals locally. Such rules undermine California's ability to prevent hunger, experienced by one out of every five California children, and undermine schools' ability to focus on child learning and development.

As you know, California Senate Bill 128/Assembly Bill 128, the Legislative Budget, was passed by both the Assembly and Senate earlier this week. Importantly, it includes funding to pay for school meals for every child and grant funding for kitchens and purchase of Californian grown food. These are priorities that we have been pushing for in Congress, including through *the Universal School Meal Program Act* and *the School Food Modernization Act*. If California were to enact SB128/AB128, it would not only achieve improved health and educational opportunity for California's children, but it may also give great momentum to the national movement.

We know that you share our support for child well-being and food justice, and believe the universal school meal and kitchen infrastructure components of the Legislative Budget are an important opportunity to advance those goals. We respectfully request these proposals be given your full and thorough review, and trust that they will receive the serious consideration they

deserve. Thank you for taking the time to consider our thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,



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Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

/s/

Nanette Diaz Barragán

/s/

Julia Brownley

/s/

Salud Carbajal

/s/

Tony Cárdenas

/s/

J. Luis Correa

/s/

Jim Costa

/s/

Jared Huffman

/s/

Ro Khanna

/s/

Barbara Lee

/s/

Zoe Lofgren

/s/

Ted W. Lieu

/s/

Alan Lowenthal

/s/

Doris O. Matsui

/s/

Jerry McNerney

/s/

Grace F. Napolitano

/s/

Jimmy Panetta

/s/

Lucille Roybal-Allard

/s/

Jackie Speier

/s/

Mark Takano

/s/

Mike Thompson

/s/

Juan Vargas