

Casey Introduces Legislation to Help Child Care Providers Serve Nutritious Meals

NOVEMBER 14, 2023

New bill would ease financial pressures child care providers face by increasing meal reimbursements

Family child care providers currently receive as little as 59 cents in reimbursement through the Child and Adult Care Food Program for each breakfast they serve

Participation rates of family child care providers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program have drastically declined due to financial strains

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced legislation to address financial challenges faced by child care providers across the country who participate the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Providers such as family child care homes, child care centers, Head Start programs, and after-school programs provide meals to more than 4.2 million children each day with the support of the CACFP. The *Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act* would increase the reimbursements rates that child care providers receive for these meals, helping to ensure that millions of children receive nutritious meals and easing the significant financial burdens for both child care providers and parents struggling to afford child care. Companion legislation has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representative Greg Landsman (D-OH-1).

“Every child deserves access to nutritious meals, especially during their formative years,” said Senator Bob Casey. **“The research is clear: the CACFP improves the quality of meals in child care settings. By easing the burden on child care providers, the *Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act* will ensure that children are receiving healthy and nutritious meals and are set up to reach their full potential.”**

“Across the country, we continue to face an unprecedented shortage of child care workers, which will only worsen if providers don’t receive critical federal investment. Parents today depend on child care providers to meet essential needs, including proper nutrition, which is expensive,” said AFSCME President Lee Saunders. **“The *Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act* would address this crisis by getting long-overdue increases in reimbursements to providers so they can continue to serve nutritious meals to children. We applaud Sen. Casey for being a leader on this issue and introducing this critical bill.”**

Because of insufficient reimbursement rates and outdated policies of CACFP, many child care providers face financial barriers to participating in the program. This bill will increase the reimbursement rate so that a family child care provider serving seven children could receive an additional \$475 a month or \$5,700 a year in reimbursements and a Head Start program or child care center serving 100 children could receive an additional \$600 a month or \$7,200 a year in reimbursements.

To increase reimbursement rates, the *Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act* would modify the CACFP by initially increasing reimbursement rates for all eligible meals and snacks by 10 cents, after which the reimbursement rate will be tied to inflation. The bill would also eliminate the two-tiered reimbursement rate system for family child care providers in which reimbursement rates vary depending on the level of local poverty and reimburse family child care providers for meals served to their own children.

Senator Casey has long fought to ensure children have access to healthy, nutritious meals during their formative years. Earlier this year, Senator Casey and Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) **introduced** the *Wise Investment in our Children (WIC) Act* to expand eligibility for children to participate in the WIC program. Additionally, in 2021, Senator Casey **introduced** the *Access to Healthy Foods for Young Children Act*, with 14 cosponsors, aimed at providing needed nutrition assistance to many families who are struggling because of the COVID-19 pandemic and to improve CAFCP’s effectiveness.

This bill is cosponsored by Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), John Fetterman (D-PA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ed Markey (D-MA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tina Smith (D-MN), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Peter Welch (D-VT).

The Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act has been endorsed by over 40 national organizations including American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA), and ZERO TO THREE.

Read more about the *Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act* [here](#).

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