

**ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 115**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 12, 2024

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblywoman TENNILLE R. MCCOY

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Assemblyman CRAIG J. COUGHLIN

District 19 (Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Schnall and Rodriguez

SYNOPSIS

Urges United States Congress to pass “Universal School Meals Program Act of 2023.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/28/2024)

1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** urging the United States Congress to
2 pass the “Universal School Meals Program Act of 2023.”

3
4 **WHEREAS**, Millions of people face food insecurity every day and,
5 before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, five million children in
6 the United States lived in food insecure homes; and

7 **WHEREAS**, The pandemic has exacerbated this problem, with the
8 United States Department of Agriculture estimating that 12 million
9 children in the United States lived in food insecure homes at the
10 height of the pandemic, many of whom experienced the stress of
11 food insecurity for the first time; and

12 **WHEREAS**, Families across the United States continue to struggle
13 financially in the aftermath of the pandemic; putting food and other
14 basic necessities out of reach for many working families; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Hungry children are more likely to have less energy, be
16 more easily distracted, come to school late or miss school entirely;
17 and

18 **WHEREAS**, Free and accessible school meals have been shown to
19 reduce financial stress for students and their families, and to
20 improve the health, educational, and behavioral outcomes of
21 students; and

22 **WHEREAS**, Prior to the start of the pandemic, close to 30 million
23 children in the country relied on free or reduced-priced breakfast
24 and lunch offered through the United States Department of
25 Agriculture; and

26 **WHEREAS**, Schools offering universal school meals during the
27 COVID-19 pandemic have played an important role in fighting the
28 rise in child hunger; and

29 **WHEREAS**, Due to significant economic disruption caused by the
30 pandemic, the United States Department of Agriculture provided
31 waivers of certain school meal rules, allowing school meals to be
32 served free for all students; and

33 **WHEREAS**, The “Universal School Meals Program Act of 2023,”
34 currently pending in the United States Congress, would deliver
35 permanent relief to millions of food insecure families by providing
36 free breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a snack to all school children
37 regardless of their socioeconomic status; and

38 **WHEREAS**, The “Universal School Meals Program Act of 2023,” if
39 enacted by the United States Congress, would eliminate school food
40 debt and reimburse schools for all delinquent school meal debt; and

41 **WHEREAS**, The “Universal School Meals Program Act of 2023,”
42 would expand the existing free school breakfast and lunch program
43 so that every child receives a free breakfast, lunch, dinner, and
44 snack, irrespective of income, ensuring no child is left hungry; now,
45 therefore,

46
47 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
48 Jersey (the Senate concurring):

ACR115 MURPHY, MCCOY

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1 1. The Legislature of the State of New Jersey respectfully urges
2 the United States Congress to pass the “Universal School Meals
3 Program Act of 2023.”

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5 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
6 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the
7 Secretary of the Senate to the Speaker of the United States House of
8 Representatives, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United
9 States House of Representatives, and the Majority and Minority
10 Leaders of the United States Senate, and to each member of
11 Congress elected from New Jersey.

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STATEMENT

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16 This concurrent resolution urges the United States Congress to
17 pass the “Universal School Meals Program Act of 2023.” This federal
18 legislation would provide free breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a snack to
19 all school children regardless of their socioeconomic background.
20 This legislation also eliminates school food debt and reimburses
21 schools for all delinquent school meal debt.