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Raising Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids

The health of our children has always been a priority for our nation. That's why ensuring that Ohio children receive the healthy, nutritious meals they need to learn and succeed is so important. Earlier this month, the Senate unanimously passed the [Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010](#) to improve nutrition standards in our schools and ensure greater access to healthy meals before and after the school day ends.

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Too many children in our nation go hungry. **Twenty percent of Ohioans under 18 years of age – nearly 570,000 children** – experience hunger on a daily basis.



We invest in childhood nutrition because we recognize that access to healthy, nutritious foods is critical to our children's health and ability to learn. We recognize that eradicating hunger will help children grow and become productive adults. And we recognize that lowering the rate of childhood obesity will improve the health of our children and lower medical costs.

More than one million children nationwide slip through the cracks and don't receive critical nutrition assistance available to them through the National School Lunch Program.

This beneficial program, which serves more than 31 million children each day, was created in 1946 after World War II officers noticed that many new recruits were plagued by malnutrition. Just as these military leaders urged the creation of the school lunch program, hunger and nutrition advocates have partnered with educators, business leaders, and health care providers to improve childhood nutrition programs.

That's why the [Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010](#) would increase funding for the school lunch program over the next ten years – without adding to the deficit. The bill included provisions from a bill I introduced earlier this year aimed at helping more children access nutrition programs. My Hunger Free Schools Act would reduce paperwork and administrative expenses by auto-enrolling the most needy children in school lunch programs through "direct certification." It would also allow eligible schools in high poverty areas to serve universal free school lunch and breakfasts. In Ohio, an estimated 432 schools enrolling more than 150,000 students could opt in to this program.

The effects of poor nutrition reach beyond the boundaries of hunger. It also fuels childhood obesity, which plagues communities across

our nation. That's why this bill is really a down-payment on the future of our children – and our nation.

Reauthorization would dramatically **reshape and update nutrition standards** to help us reduce childhood obesity rates and put healthier food, including more fruits and vegetables, in school cafeterias.



By **modernizing nutritional standards, addressing the sale of junk foods at schools, and increasing reimbursement rates** to allow for better meals, this bill would help make healthy food more accessible and affordable for school districts.

A good school day starts with a good meal. The National School Lunch Program is instrumental in bridging the food security gap among Ohio's young people. Sending the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act to the President is about improving the health of our children and lowering the rate of childhood obesity and diabetes.

It's about ensuring that children aren't going hungry during the school day so they can learn and succeed. Our children's are the nation's most important asset. The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act is a wise investment.



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