



Maryland HB 806

Education – Summer Meals Expansion Grant Pilot Program

Marla R. Caplon, R.D., L.D. Nutrition Committee Chair

Position: **Support**

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Kaiser and members of the committee. My name is Marla Caplon. I am the Nutrition Committee Chair of the Maryland School Nutrition Association and a Registered Dietitian. I am here today on behalf of our membership consisting of Directors, Supervisors, Cafeteria Managers and Food Service Staff across the State of Maryland.

The Maryland School Nutrition Association supports this bill.

The Summer Food Service Program is a federally funded child nutrition program where sponsors receive reimbursement for meals served to children 18 years of age and younger. We are all familiar with the saying, “*Hunger Doesn’t Take a Vacation*”, and this is so true. The need for this program continues to grow. This is the only federal program that provides healthy meals to students during the summer school break; the majority of the recipients rely on school meals during the school year. As the Summer Food Service Program is an entitlement program, there is no limit to the number of meals that can be served and claimed. Additional funding could provide the opportunity for outreach to help determine the locations of eligible children and assist in the creation of programs as needed.

While meals are available, due to transportation barriers, children are often not able to get to the sites. Extra funding could be used to purchase vehicles which could transport meals to various locations, thus providing more meals to children.

All LEA’s in the State of Maryland are committed to supporting legislation and programs which enhance food access for children. This bill would expand the summer meals programs by adding state funding to strengthen the federally funded Summer Food Service Program. As mentioned above, the Maryland School Nutrition Association supports this bill.

Thank you for your time and attention.