

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8509

To establish a National Advisory Council on Unpaid Meal Debt in Child Nutrition Programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 26, 2022

Ms. OMAR introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To establish a National Advisory Council on Unpaid Meal Debt in Child Nutrition Programs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Advisory
5 Council on Unpaid Meal Debt Act of 2022”.

6 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON UNPAID MEAL**
7 **DEBT IN CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS.**

8 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established a Na-
9 tional Advisory Council on Unpaid Meal Debt in Child Nu-

1 trition Programs (in this section referred to as the “Coun-
2 cil”).

3 (b) DUTIES.—The Council shall provide rec-
4 ommendations, in accordance with subsection (g), to the
5 Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service with re-
6 spect to addressing unpaid school meal fees by ensuring
7 that—

8 (1) students are not stigmatized; and

9 (2) school food authorities can maintain fiscal
10 solvency in order to ensure the long-term viability of
11 school meal programs.

12 (c) MEMBERSHIP.—

13 (1) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Council
14 shall be composed of 14 members appointed by the
15 Secretary as follows:

16 (A) 2 members shall be school nutrition
17 State agency directors who are employed in dif-
18 ferent States;

19 (B) 2 members shall be school food service
20 directors of a school meal program in an urban
21 area who are employed in different States;

22 (C) 2 members shall be school food service
23 directors of a school meal program in a rural
24 area who are employed in different States;

1 (D) 2 members shall be officials of the
2 Food and Nutrition Service office of the De-
3 partment of Agriculture;

4 (E) 2 members shall be parents or guard-
5 ians (who are not related to one another or to
6 the same child) of children who are eligible for
7 free and reduced price school meals;

8 (F) 2 members shall represent organiza-
9 tions with expertise in the school meal pro-
10 grams; and

11 (G) 2 members shall be food service profes-
12 sionals who—

13 (i) work in school cafeterias; and

14 (ii) maintain daily contact with stu-
15 dents, including by preparing or serving
16 meals or working at registers.

17 (2) TERMS.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each member shall be
19 appointed for the life of the Council.

20 (B) VACANCIES.—Any member appointed
21 to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration
22 of the life of the Council shall be appointed for
23 the remainder of the life of the Council.

24 (d) COMPENSATION.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Members shall serve without
2 pay.

3 (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall
4 receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of
5 subsistence, in accordance with applicable provisions
6 under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United
7 States Code.

8 (3) PARENTS OR GUARDIANS.—In the case of a
9 member who is a parent or guardian appointed
10 under subsection (c)(1)(E), such member, in addi-
11 tion to reimbursement under paragraph (2), shall, at
12 the discretion of the Secretary, be compensated in
13 advance for other personal expenses related to par-
14 ticipation on the Council, including child care ex-
15 penses and lost wages during scheduled Council
16 meetings.

17 (4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
18 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
19 this subsection \$1,500,000, to remain available
20 through the date described in subsection (h).

21 (e) CHAIRPERSON; VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

22 (1) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for election to
23 Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the Council, an
24 individual must be a member of the Council de-
25 scribed in subsection (c)(1).

1 (2) ELECTION.—The Chairperson and Vice
2 Chairperson of the Council shall be elected by such
3 members.

4 (f) MEETINGS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall meet not
6 fewer than 2 times per year at the call of the Chair-
7 person.

8 (2) QUORUM.—5 members of the Council shall
9 constitute a quorum.

10 (g) REPORT.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after
12 the establishment of the Council under subsection
13 (a), the Council shall submit to the Administrator of
14 the Food and Nutrition Service a report containing
15 the recommendations described in subsection (b).

16 (2) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 1 year after
17 the submission of the report under paragraph (1),
18 the Secretary, acting through the Administrator of
19 the Food and Nutrition Service, shall use the rec-
20 ommendations contained in such report to issue
21 guidance with respect to addressing unpaid school
22 meal fees.

23 (h) TERMINATION.—The Council shall terminate on
24 the date that is 1 day after the submission of the report
25 required under subsection (g).

1 (i) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall
2 provide the Council with such technical and other assist-
3 ance, including secretarial and clerical assistance, as may
4 be required to carry out its functions.

5 (j) UNPAID SCHOOL MEAL FEES DEFINED.—In this
6 section, the term “unpaid school meal fees” means out-
7 standing fees owed by a household to a local educational
8 agency for lunches under this Act or breakfasts under sec-
9 tion 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C.
10 1773).

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