

Support for School Meals for All (SB 1581)

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Why do we ask children to carry what breaks adults? At what point did we confuse endurance with virtue, and neglect with responsibility? I was raised in an immigrant household where survival was a condition, not a choice. My mother labored long, brutal hours in an onion shed, a form of work that consumes the body and empties the spirit, and leaving was never possible—if she stopped, we would not be fed. We always had food at home, purchased with her absence day and night. At school, I excelled—honors, sport, achievement without witnesses. No one was there when my name was spoken aloud or when my body crossed the field. I learned how to become my own audience. Our lives were already fractured by necessity, childhood compressed under adult weight. Free school meals mattered not because I was starving, but because they interrupted the logic of abandonment. They lifted one burden from shoulders already asked to bear too much. The sanctity of human life is not proven by words or slogans, but by whether a society chooses to feed its children. Feeding children is not generosity, nor policy, nor charity. It is a moral line. A society that crosses it teaches children that they are expected to survive the unbearable—and calls that the American Dream. If feeding children is considered too burdensome for America, then we have lost any claim to knowing what makes America great.

Thank you,

AC

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