

Support for School Meals for All (SB 1581)

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

In school, being fed was one thing I felt was consistent and important in my successful learning. For years I had lunches paid for and never had to worry. Later on I did not have that luxury, being a child I could not understand when I got to the front of the line and was told I couldn't get lunch like my friends and the other students because there was an unpaid balance on my account. Amongst the turbulence of being a depressed teenager in the midst of divorcing parents and struggles of a parent with addiction, this moment felt world stopping and hindered my education. I developed an eating disorder, not eating at school for lunch or breakfast, and often skipping dinner. That year was the most difficult for me in the public school system, and being able to have at least one reliable meal in my belly might have helped me struggle less. I felt isolated among my classmates and friends during lunch hours, sitting with at most an apple or orange while others ate full meals and socialized. Children should not have to think about or worry about when they may be able to eat, especially when they are in an education system that is supposed to help them learn and grow.

Thank you for your time,

Michelle G.

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