

My name is Kyle Ogaldez, an advocate at Young Voices, a Sophomore at Blackstone Academy Charter, and a youth project leader for Healthy Meals for All. I'm here today in support of bill H 7400, to highlight the importance of this bill.

I am firm to believe that students have a right to receive healthy meals regardless of their financial situation. Some students are unable to receive food at home, and can't get through the day without anything to eat. Speaking from my own experience, a lot of students I find myself around don't enjoy the food. Food either runs out in our cafeteria, students don't even get up to get food, but in a lot of cases, the food is not good, nor does it feel edible with its quality. Us as students, we deserve a good cooked meal made locally.

My experience within farm fresh has proved students dissatisfaction with their lunch. My colleague from Young Voices and the Rhode Island Healthy Meals Coalition and I have collected over 150 results from students in Providence, showing that only 32% of students actually want to eat the school lunch, and after asking, we've learned that to increase those numbers students actually want more local fresh foods, cooking from scratch, more spices and flavor, and especially more culturally diverse meals being served in their schools.

This bill should pass for the benefit of students' education, as well as mine. The direct connection of improved nutrition to better test scores and increased classroom attention shows the need of passing this bill. Without it, students who can't eat at home, those without a nearby grocery store, those relying on processed foods, and those who don't enjoy school meals will be deprived of the nutrition they need in their school environment.

Join me in support of Bill H 7400, to ensure that all students regardless of their financial situation can have access to healthy, flavorful and culturally diverse meals. Your support can make a significant difference in our school lunches, as well as improving the educational knowledge students can absorb without focusing on their own hunger.

Thank you for your time