



May 18, 2026

Re: Senate Bill 2663 Healthy School Meals for All Children

Dear Senators,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 2663. Two of the clearest and simplest commandments that Jesus gave to his followers were to feed the hungry and to care for the little ones. This bill combines these commands as it provides food for children.

Our church, Community Church of Providence, currently hosts a small food pantry which serves the wider community and also some of our own members, including families who depend on school meals during the academic year and park lunches during the summer months. School breaks are particularly difficult for the families who rely on these meals, as they run short of food and struggle to meet their needs during these times, and so we can see directly the positive impact that free school meals have on the lives of children, relieving stress and allowing them to focus on learning, growing, and establishing identity.

As a parent myself, there were several years in which it was a challenge for our family to afford the cost of school meals. As an adult, I recall the stigma that my childhood classmates faced when they were set apart as those who receive "free or reduced lunch."

When all students can eat for free without concern for whether a parent/guardian has provided money for meals or completed a qualified meal benefit application, stress and stigma vanish. The children who need meals the most don't feel singled out. All students become equal in the cafeteria.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this proposal. that will improve learning, reduce food insecurity, provide healthy meals for our children, and eliminate meal debt. We believe that schools and families alike will experience improved outcomes.

Sincerely,

Rev. Sarah Reed Jay  
Senior Pastor

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