Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

We write to express our support for a strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization that strengthens and improves child nutrition programs in school and during out of school time.

This Child Nutrition Reauthorization offers the opportunity to provide significant improvements to the Summer Food Service Program. According to the most recent data, only 18 percent of children who receive free or reduced price meals at school also receive a summer meal. This leaves the majority of low-income children across the country without access to the nutrition they need during the summer months.

Transportation barriers, severe weather, and red tape can prevent children from accessing the summer meals program in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Additionally, 30 percent of low-income children live in communities currently ineligible to operate open summer meals sites. Lack of access to proper nutrition during the summer months has negative consequences on children’s health and education outcomes. The school and out-of-school based meal programs have a long history of bipartisan support for their role in providing children with the nutrition they need to grow up healthy and excel in school.

Proven solutions exist that would strengthen the summer meals program. These include streamlining out-of-school programs to reduce paperwork and make it easier for sites to operate; providing grocery credits to low-income families during the summer months; and, providing more options for community-based organizations to reach children with nutritious meals. These methods have demonstrated bipartisan support and would enhance the current site-based model of the summer meals program while providing additional models for reaching children in hard to reach communities. We encourage Congress to include these options in Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

Thank you for your work on this issue. The summer meals program has not been fully updated by Congress since its creation in 1975. It is our hope that we are able to move forward on a strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill that leverages the strong bipartisan support for these improvements to the summer meals program and protects and strengthens all child nutrition programs. Hungry children across the country cannot wait another year.

Sincerely,

Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress
Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress  

Richard Hanna  
Member of Congress  

Michael M. Honda  
Member of Congress  

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress  

Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress  

John Katko  
Member of Congress  

Ann Kirkpatrick  
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Nita Lowey  
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Michelle Lujan Grisham  
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Frank C. Johnson Jr.  
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Randy Hultgren  
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Jackie Walorski  
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John Lewis  
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Katherine Clark  
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Dan Kildee  
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Ben R. Luján  
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Mark Pocan  
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Sander M. Levin
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José E. Serrano
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Louise Slaughter
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Tim Ryan
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John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Terri Sewell
Member of Congress

Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress

Tim Murphy
Member of Congress

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

CC: Congressman John Kline and Congressman Bobby Scott