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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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Dear Members of the Joint Committee:

I write today to thank the Joint Committee on Education for holding a hearing on H.327, and S.242, and appreciate the opportunity to voice my strong support for these pieces of legislation to expand the successful "breakfast after the bell" model.

School meals are just as essential as textbooks when it comes to helping our kids learn and succeed. For some students – especially those living in poverty – healthy school breakfasts and lunches are their only nutritious meals in a given day.

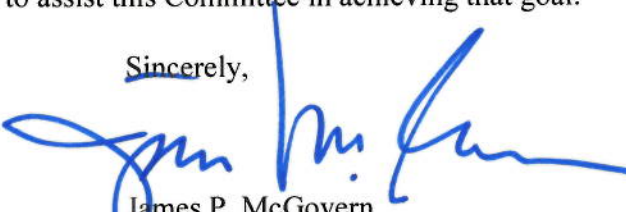
In Massachusetts, we know that the School Breakfast Program is currently underutilized. By incorporating breakfast as part of the school day, more students across our Commonwealth will have access to the nutritious food they need to learn. Reports from teachers in schools that have implemented this model indicate that breakfast after the bell improves attendance and readiness to learn, and cuts down on hunger-related nurse visits. Importantly, breakfast after the bell also reduces the stigma associated with participating in the program.

As the Food Research & Action Center pointed out in its testimony, several states across the country including Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and West Virginia have dramatically increased school breakfast participation by successfully implementing breakfast after the bell programs similar to those proposed in H.327 and S.242.

I applaud Senator DiDomenico and Representative Vega for introducing these important bills, and I urge the Committee to report favorably this legislation.

I look forward to continuing our work to ensure that every child in Massachusetts has access to nutritious food, and stand ready to assist this Committee in achieving that goal.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress