

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 7, 2019

Jason Lewis, Chair  
Joint Committee on Education  
Massachusetts State House, Room 473G  
Boston, MA 02133

Alice Hanlon Peisch, Chair  
Joint Committee on Education  
Massachusetts State House, Room 473G  
Boston, MA 02133

Joan Lovely, Vice Chair  
Joint Committee on Education  
Massachusetts State House, Room 473G  
Boston, MA 02133

Paul Tucker, Vice Chair  
Joint Committee on Education  
Massachusetts State House, Room 473G  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Members of the Joint Committee:

We write today to voice our strong support for House Bill 591 and Senate Bill 267, 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.

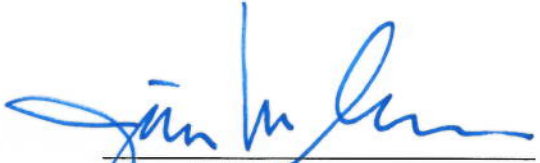
In Massachusetts, we know that the School Breakfast Program is currently underutilized. By incorporating breakfast as part of the school day, more students across our Commonwealth will have access to the nutritional food they need to learn. Reports from teachers in schools that have implemented this model indicate that Breakfast After the Bell improves attendance, 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.

A recent report by the Food Research & Action Center highlights how several states across the country, including Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and West Virginia, have dramatically increased school breakfast participation by implementing Breakfast After the Bell programs. Currently, Massachusetts ranks 33<sup>rd</sup> in the nation in school breakfast participation, stagnant from the 2018 report. H.591 and S.267 are important steps toward increasing participation rates and eliminating childhood hunger.

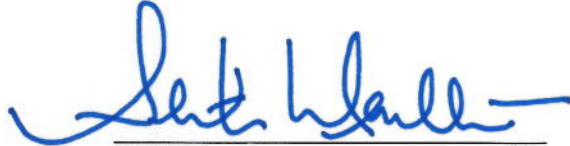
We applaud Senator DiDomenico and Representatives Vargas and Vega for introducing these important bills and we urge the Committee to report favorably on this legislation. We also support the movement leading the advocacy on behalf of this legislation by the Rise and Shine Massachusetts coalition which is comprised of education, healthcare, anti-poverty and anti-hunger advocates.

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

Sincerely,



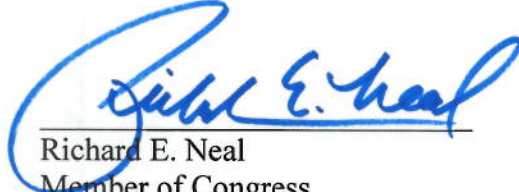
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



Joseph P. Kennedy III  
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal  
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Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress



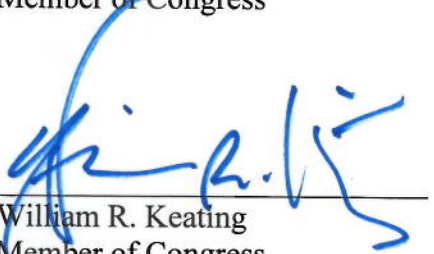
Stephen F. Lynch  
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